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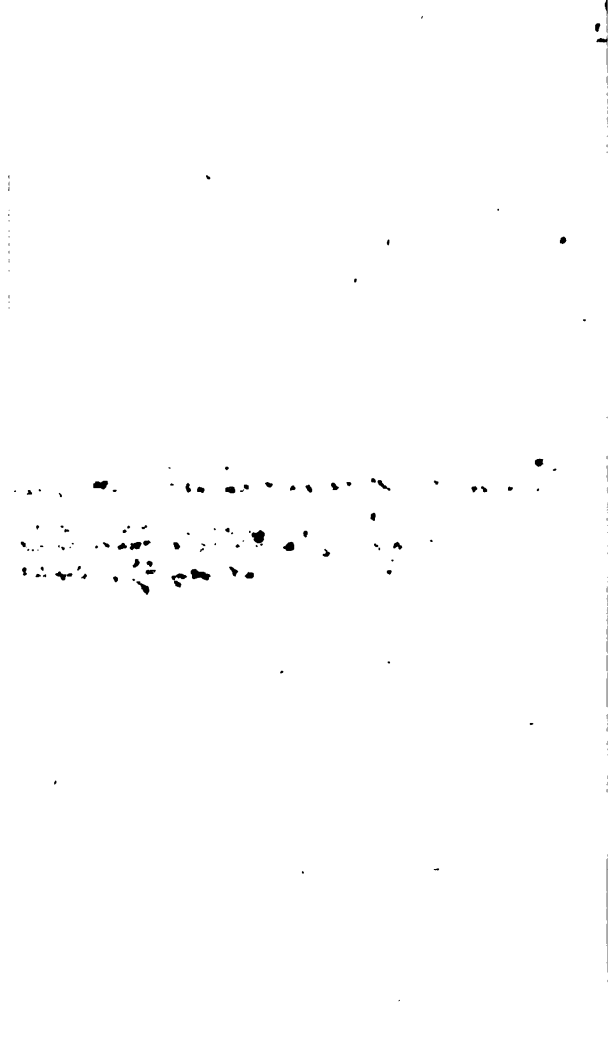
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A
C A T E C H I S M
ON
T H E P A R A B L E S
OF THE
N E W T E S T A M E N T.

DESIGNED FOR THE USE OF BIBLE CLASSES, AND
THE HIGHER CLASSES IN SABBATH SCHOOLS.

BY JOHN M. AUSTIN,
AUTHOR OF "A VOICE TO YOUTH," ETC.

"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."

B O S T O N :
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P R E F A C E .

IN preparing the following work, the chief aim of the author has been *conciseness*—to compress as much information as possible on the important subjects investigated, into a book of suitable size for Sabbath schools. How far he has succeeded in accomplishing this object, he leaves for others to judge. That a Class Book of this description was greatly needed in our denomination, there can hardly be a doubt. It is well known that the advocates of the popular religious errors of the day depend almost entirely upon the parables for the support of their sentiments. Take these parables out of their hands, and there are but few plain declarations of Scripture to which they could resort in proof of their forbidding doctrines. Let any discerning individual attend but for a short period, upon the preaching which is now very singularly termed *evangelical*, especially in seasons of revival, and he will readily perceive that a *repetition* and a *literal construction* of the highly figurative language of the parables, are the chief means resorted to for the purpose of arousing the fears and blinding the judgment of the people. Children and youth are exceedingly liable to be erroneously impressed and led astray by these means. It is to throw around them a shield of light which shall defend them from these influences, that the following pages have been prepared.

Although we have already two excellent works on the parables, yet from their size and expense, it is not to be supposed they are within the reach of the great mass of Sabbath school scholars. And even if they were, it is doubtful whether they could be induced to peruse treatises of this elaborate description, in such a manner as to impress the contents upon their minds effectually. But it is different when the parables are placed before children as a *study*. In committing the explanations to memory, the scholar must necessarily acquire a fund of information which he would not be likely otherwise to obtain, and much of which he will re-

tain through life. The author has given to the parables the constructions which generally prevail among Universalists. And it has been his object to simplify his explanations and bring them within the comprehension of children, as much as the nature of the case would admit. Let none say the lessons are too easy for Bible classes and the higher classes in the Sabbath school. When the knowledge imparted is *valuable*, is it possible to make it too plain and simple? It is believed the most advanced scholars, in committing these lessons, cannot fail to obtain many *facts* which will greatly assist them in forming and maturing their religious opinions.

A few of the minor parables have been omitted. This has been done to avoid making the work too large and too expensive. Those omitted, however, are so plain that few can misunderstand them, and none can turn them to the support of error. In the parable of the Unclean Spirit, it has been thought proper to treat briefly on the general subject of demoniacal possessions. The same course has been pursued in those parables where the words *hell*, *unquenchable fire*, *devil*, etc., are found.

The author would take this occasion to acknowledge his indebtedness for many suggestions, in preparing this Catechism, and for the opinions of several learned commentators, to those valuable works, Whittemore's and Ballou's Notes on the Parables, Paige's Selections, and Balfour's Inquiry. He would especially refer scholars who desire a more full explanation and illustration of the Parables, to the two former of the books above named.

That these pages may have a tendency to throw the light of God's truth into many young minds, is the earnest prayer of

THE AUTHOR.

DANVERS, APRIL, 1842.

CATECHISM

ON THE PARABLES.

LESSON I.

The Jews.

Q. From whom did the Jews descend ?

A. They descended from Abraham, the ancient servant of God.

Q. From what did they derive their general name of *Jews* ?

A. From Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob, whose descendants became the most numerous of the tribes of Israel.

Q. Where do we find the sacred history of the Jews ?

A. In the Old Testament.

Q. Where can the profane history of the Jews be found ?

A. In the works of Flavius Josephus.

Q. Who was Josephus ?

A. He was an eminent Jewish writer, who was born a few years after the advent of Christ.

Q. To what period does he bring down the history of the Jews ?

A. To the destruction of Jerusalem, A. D. 70.

Q. Are his writings entitled to credit ?

A. They are entitled to great credit, and have universally received it, on account of the acknowledged learning and integrity of their author.

Q. Why is his history of the overthrow and destruction of Jerusalem, and of the wars and calamities

which preceded and accompanied that important event, entitled to entire belief?

A. Because he was an active participator in these transactions, and an eye-witness of much that he relates.

Q. Which of the Jewish tribes occupied Judea, in the days of the Saviour?

A. The tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

Q. What had become of the other ten tribes of Israel?

A. They had been carried into captivity by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, 740 years before Christ, from which it is supposed they never returned.

Q. What was the political condition of the Jews at the advent of the Redeemer?

A. They were in subjection to the Roman government. About 40 years before the birth of Jesus, Judea fell into the possession of the Romans, who placed Herod the Great, an Idumean, upon a throne, to rule over it as king.

Q. What was their religious condition at the same period?

A. They had departed from the purity of their ancient religion, and were influenced more by traditions than by the instructions of Moses and the prophets.

Q. How did the Saviour describe their corruptions?

A. "Wo unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! For ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness."

Q. What were the principal sects among the Jews at the advent of the Messiah?

A. The Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes.

Q. Who were the Pharisees?

A. They were a sect which arose after the Babylonian captivity. They had become very numerous and popular in the days of Jesus.

Q. What is the meaning of the word *Pharisee*?

A. It is derived from the Hebrew word *pharash*—which means *separated*.

Q. Why did they assume this name?

A. Because they *separated* themselves from all other Jews, and made great pretensions to piety and holiness of life.

Q. What was their true character?

A. According to the language of Christ, they were great hypocrites, and assumed their religious profession and appearance as a cloak to conceal their wickedness.

Q. Who were the Sadducees?

A. They were a sect who took their name from *Sadoc*, their founder, who lived about 200 years before Christ.

Q. Were they numerous?

A. They did not number so many as the Pharisees, but were generally people of wealth.

Q. What were their distinguishing traits?

A. They rejected all the traditions of the Pharisees, and received for their guide only the well authenticated writings of Moses, the great law-giver, and the prophets. They did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, nor in the existence of angels or spirits, and maintained that men ought to serve God from pure love, and not from any hope of reward or fear of punishment.

Q. Who were the Essenes?

A. They were a small but ancient sect, who are supposed to have much resembled, in their mode of life, the Shakers of our own day.

Q. What account have we of this class of people?

A. They are represented as having been the most pure and holy sect among the Jews.

Q. What peculiar tenets did they entertain?

A. They believed that religion consisted wholly in

contemplation and silence—that no offering was acceptable to God, but a serene and composed mind, addicted to meditation upon divine things—and that the law of Moses was an allegorical system of spiritual and mysterious truths, in the understanding of which they paid but little regard to the outward letter.

Q. Was it a momentous era in the history of the Jews, when Jesus was upon the earth?

A. It was. The sceptre had departed from Judah, according to the ancient prophecy of Jacob, and Shiloh (Christ) had come, to whom the gathering of the people was to be given.

Q. Were the Jews in a very unsettled state at that time?

A. They were. The Roman yoke pressed heavy on their necks, and they were seeking every opportunity to throw it off. Wars, feuds and contentions prevailed on every hand.

Q. What was the general moral condition of the Jews at that day?

A. They were exceedingly corrupt—insomuch that Christ declared they were filling up the measure of their fathers' wickedness.

Q. Did the Redeemer predict great calamities and woes as about to overwhelm the Jewish nation?

A. He did. He declared that there should be "great tribulation," such as had not been since the beginning of the world to that time, nor ever should be again.

Q. In what other language did he refer to these coming woes?

A. Pointing to the massive temple at Jerusalem, which then stood in all its strength and glory, he said, "See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." And when he beheld women following him to his crucifixion and

weeping, he exclaimed, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children."

LESSON II.

The Jews—continued.

Q. Did the Saviour sometimes depict the doom about to befall the Jews, in highly figurative language?

A. He did, in repeated instances. He described himself as the Son of man, coming with his angels to judge the world.

Q. Can you repeat such a passage?

A. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn; and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (Matt. xxiv. 29—31.)

Q. Is it not supposed by many that this language refers to a day of judgment in the future world?

A. It is.

Q. How do we know that such is not the true application, but that it refers to some great calamity which was then soon to take place?

A. We know this by the language of Jesus, in the same connection—"Verily I say unto you, *this generation* shall not pass, till *all these things* be fulfilled." (v. 34.)

Q. Do the Scripture writers frequently make use of similar figurative language in describing great national calamities?

A. They do. The prophets predict the overthrow of Babylon, Egypt, and Judea, under the figure of convulsions in the heavenly bodies. (Isa. xiii. 9, 10; Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8; Dan. viii. 10; Joel ii. 30, 31.)

Q. Does the Saviour, in any other instance, describe the woes about coming upon the Jews, under the figure of his coming with his angels?

A. He does: "The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then shall he reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here which *shall not taste of death*, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." (Matt. xvi. 27, 28.)

Q. Did many of the parables of Jesus refer to this time of "great tribulation," which soon was to overwhelm Jerusalem and all Judea?

A. They did, most evidently.

Q. Did the Redeemer represent these woes in the light of punishments for the national sins of the Israelites?

A. He did: "That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation." (Matt. xxiii. 35, 36.)

Q. Were these predictions of Christ fulfilled?

A. They met with a literal and most awful fulfilment.

Q. How long after the death of Christ?

A. About 40 years.

Q. Where do we find the most authentic account of the woes that then came upon the Jews?

A. In Josephus' history of the wars of the Jews.

Q. Who were the instruments in the hands of God, in the overthrow of the Jews, and the destruction of Jerusalem?

A. The Romans.

Q. What was the occasion of the war between the Jews and the Romans?

A. The former rose in rebellion, and endeavored to regain their national independence. The Roman Emperor, Vespasian, sent against them a large army, under the command of Titus. He entirely surrounded Jerusalem with trenches and walls, so that none of its inhabitants could escape.

Q. Were there more than the usual number of people in Jerusalem, when surrounded by the army of Titus?

A. There were. Vast numbers of Jews had assembled in that city, to celebrate the annual feast of the Passover, who found it impossible to avoid the general overthrow. More than two millions of Jews are supposed to have then been within the walls of Jerusalem.

Q. How long did the siege continue?

A. About six months.

Q. What was the condition of the inhabitants during the siege?

A. They were reduced to the most extreme and hopeless suffering. Multitudes perished with hunger. So great was the famine that the people lived upon one another; and even mothers broiled their own infants and ate them.

Q. What other evils came upon them?

A. The inhabitants were divided into different factions, under separate leaders, and fought each other with desperate fury—thus adding the horrors of internal war to their other afflictions. The multitude of unburied carcasses which filled the streets, corrupted the air, and produced a deadly pestilence, which swept away thousands.

Q. What was the final termination of these woes ?

A. The Romans at length gained possession of Jerusalem, and commenced an indiscriminate slaughter of the inhabitants. The streets were blocked up with dead bodies, and the gutters were flooded with rivers of human gore. The city was burnt and demolished, and the splendid temple was levelled to the earth—not one stone was left upon another.

Q. How many lives were lost amid these terrific scenes ?

A. Josephus computes the number who perished at Jerusalem, by sword, famine and pestilence, at one millien and one hundred thousand ! It is supposed also, that two hundred and fifty thousand more were cut off in the various cities of Judea, during the same war.

Q. How many did the Romans carry into captivity ?

A. Their number is computed at nearly one hundred thousand. They were dispersed throughout the Roman empire, and have subsequently been scattered into every nation upon the earth.

Q. Have the Jews since existed as a distinct nation ?

A. They have not. They were then blotted out as a nation, and have continued, to this day, outcasts and vagabonds—degraded and trodden under foot, in every country, and in every age.

Q. And did this overthrow, and these horrors, all take place within 40 years after the death of Christ ?

A. They did.

Q. Were not, then, the predictions of Jesus, that there should be such a time of trouble as had not been since the world began, literally fulfilled ?

A. They were.

Q. With these woes distinctly in his view, would not the Redeemer naturally depict them in fearful colors, and forewarn the Jews of their approach ?

A. He would; if he possessed but the common sympathies of human nature.

Q. Would not his knowledge of these impending calamities, cause him very frequently to recur to them, and make them an important topic in his teachings?

Q. Should we be surprised that many of the parables of the Saviour, and much of the figurative language and terrific denunciation of the New Testament, refer to the awful horrors then near at hand?

Q. Is it important to have a knowledge of these great calamities which overthrew the Jews?

A. It is highly necessary that we possess a familiar acquaintance with the history of these events, to obtain a true conception of many allusions in the New Testament, and especially to arrive at a correct understanding of most of the parables.

LESSON III.

On Parables.

Q. From what is the word *parable* derived?

A. From the Greek word *parabole*.

Q. What is its meaning?

A. It signifies an allegory, a fable, a fictitious narration.

Q. How does Bishop Lowth describe a parable?

A. He says "it is that kind of allegory which consists of a continued narration of a fictitious event, applied by way of simile, to the illustration of some important truth."

Q. How long have parables been in use?

A. They are of very great antiquity, and can be traced to the earliest ages of the world.

Q. Were they confined to any particular people?

A. They were not. They can be found in the writings of the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, and all the Eastern and Oriental nations

Q. Do parables abound in the Scriptures?

A. They do, both in the Old and New Testaments

Q. Where are the principal parables of the New Testament to be found?

A. In the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Q. What is the language of Bishop Lowth in relation to the parables of the Redeemer?

A. "It is doubtful whether they excel most in wisdom and utility, or in sweetness, elegance and perspicuity."

Q. For what purpose were parables resorted to?

A. They were used to illustrate and enforce important truths more strikingly than could be done by a course of reasoning and analysis only.

Q. Why were parables in more common use in the early ages, than at the present time?

A. It was because the art of reasoning was then but little known, and the minds of men were not accustomed to abstruse speculation.

Q. Why are parables better adapted to the instruction of people in this condition, than argumentation and deduction?

A. They are calculated to engage the attention of the most listless—they are easily comprehended by the weakest and most uncultivated capacities—and not only greatly tend to elucidate truth, but to show its practical application.

Q. What other advantages were derived from the use of parables?

A. They were well calculated to convey unpleasant truths and deserved reproofs, in a manner to avoid giving offence, and yet to make salutary impressions. By relating a fictitious narration to the guilty, and obtaining their assent or reprobation of the principles

it involved, they were often made to pronounce the most severe condemnation on their own proceedings.

Q. Can you mention a parable in the Old Testament which illustrates these remarks?

A. The parable of the poor man and his ewe lamb, related by the prophet Nathan to king David, is of this description.—(2 Samuel xii. 1—6.)

Q. Did Jesus utter his parables upon the general principles above adverted to?

A. He undoubtedly did.

Q. From what were the parables of Christ chiefly drawn?

A. From the manners, customs, occupations, and views of the Jews.

Q. Did he sometimes make his parables conform to the religious prejudices and superstitions of the Israelites?

A. He did; yet without endorsing these superstitions as the truth.

Q. Why did he pursue this course?

A. We may rationally suppose he did it that he might gain their attention, and the more deeply impress upon their minds some important truth, which did not come into direct collision with these prejudices.

Q. Can you name any parables which illustrate this position?

A. The parables of the Unclean Spirit, and the Rich man and Lazarus, are of this description.

Q. What is essential to an understanding of the parables of the New Testament?

A. It is highly essential that the reader should be acquainted with the religious views, as well as the manners and customs, of the Jews in the days of Christ.

Q. What else should be taken into consideration?

A. It is important to ascertain by whom the para-

ble was uttered—to whom it was addressed—the relative position of the parties towards each other—and all the circumstances of location, time and condition, under which it was spoken.

Q. What is especially necessary to the right understanding of a parable?

A. It is especially necessary that the *context* should be taken into consideration, and that the particular *subject* or *doctrine*, which the parable was introduced to *illustrate*, should be clearly comprehended.

Q. What is the consequence of a neglect of these things?

A. Whoever fails to take all these considerations into account, or to allow them to exert a proper influence on his understanding, in perusing the parables, must unavoidably fall into error and darkness.

Q. Are we to suppose that the events narrated in a parable have actually taken place as related?

A. We are not.

Q. Why not?

A. Because it would then be an actual *history*, and not a *parable*. And, moreover, we should in this manner, embrace the *shadow*, and lose the *substance*.

Q. How, then, should we understand the language of a parable?

A. We should understand that the particular events described are entirely fictitious, and should look beyond the story related, for the important moral or doctrinal truth which it was designed to illustrate and enforce.

Q. Did the Saviour *reveal* any of the doctrines of the gospel through parables?

A. He did not. All the doctrinal and moral truths and principles of the gospel are revealed in plain, distinct, and literal language, without figure or parable.

Q. Why, then, did Jesus utter parables?

A. It was simply to illustrate and bring more

directly to the comprehension of his hearers, truths which he, in other instances, expressed in the most distinct and literal language.

Q. How are parables misused and misapplied?

A. Whenever they are so construed as to teach doctrines which the Redeemer never uttered in plain words.

Q. In what light should we view the parables in this respect?

A. We should never view them as *revealing* any doctrines not found in other portions of the Scriptures, but only as aids to a more perfect understanding of the great gospel truths proclaimed in the explicit and literal declarations of Jesus and the apostles.

LESSON IV.

Parable of the Axe.

"And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."—(Matt. iii. 10.)*

Q. By whom was this parable spoken?

A. By John the Baptist.

Q. Who was John the Baptist?

A. He was the messenger, or forerunner, who announced to the world, the advent of the Messiah.

Q. Was there any relationship between John the Baptist and Jesus Christ?

A. Their mothers were cousins.

Q. Was the coming of John as the precursor of Christ, foretold by any of the prophets?

A. His appearance was predicted by Isaiah.

* Let the teacher or a member of the class read the parable at the commencement of each lesson.

Q. Where do we find mention made of this prophecy?

A. In the *third* chapter of St. Luke's gospel.

Q. Can you repeat the passage?

A. "As it is written in the book of the words of *Essias* (*Isaiah*) the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

Q. How long had John been preaching, when Jesus commenced the proclamation of his gospel?

A. About six months.

Q. Was the ministry of John a permanent one?

A. It was not. It was designed to be but introductory to the gospel, and ceased when that gospel was given to the world by its author.

Q. To whom was John speaking, when he uttered the parable of the Axe?

A. To the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Q. How did he address them, when he saw them approaching?

A. "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

Q. To what calamitous events do the words "wrath to come" refer?

A. They refer to the temporal judgments which God was soon to bring upon the Jewish nation.

Q. Does this construction agree with that of many eminent commentators?

A. It does.

Q. Why should the opinions of commentators who disagree from us in general sentiment, be allowed great weight when they construe controverted passages in a manner to favor our views?

A. Because learned and candid men would not so

construe Scripture as to weaken their own doctrine and strengthen an opposite, unless irresistibly compelled to do so by truth and conscience.

Q. What does Dr. Adam Clarke say upon the words "wrath to come?"

A. The wrath to come, he says, is "the desolation which was about to fall on the Jewish nation for their wickedness."

Q. What construction does Dr. Gill, the eminent Baptist commentator, put upon this phrase?

A. He says, "by wrath to come, is not meant hell-fire, everlasting destruction, from which baptism could not save them; but temporal calamity and destruction, the wrath which in a little time came upon that nation to the uttermost."

Q. Do not those err who carry the fulfilment of these words into another life?

A. They undoubtedly do.

Q. Can you repeat the parable under consideration?

Q. From what occupation did John evidently draw this figure?

A. From that of a woodman.

Q. How is a woodman described by certain writers, as proceeding in his work?

A. When he selects a tree to be cut down, he lays his axe at its roots, and strips off his outer garment, that he may wield his blows more powerfully.

Q. What, then, does it indicate when a wood-cutter lays his axe near the foot of a tree?

A. It indicates that that particular tree is destined to fall beneath his blows.

Q. Do the Scriptures ever allude to the axe, as descriptive of the instruments by which God brings his judgments on a wicked nation?

A. They do. God thus speaks through the prophet Jeremiah—"Thou art my battle-axe and weapons of war: for with thee I will break in pieces the

nations ; and with thee I will destroy kingdoms."—(Jeremiah li. 20.)

Q. Who are thus referred to, in the figure of a battle-axe?

A. The Persians under Cyrus.

Q. Do the Scriptures sometimes represent a nation who are to be destroyed, as a forest of trees about to be cut down?

A. They do.

Q. Can you quote a passage of this description?

A. "They shall march with an army, and come against her with axes, as hewers of wood. They shall cut down her forests, saith the Lord, though it cannot be searched."—(Jeremiah xli. 22, 23.)

Q. Is the overthrow of a nation frequently alluded to in the Bible, under the figure of casting wood into the fire?

A. It is. In Jeremiah it is said, in regard to Judea, "I will prepare destroyers against thee, every one with his weapons ; and they shall cut down thy choice cedars, and cast them into the fire."—(Jeremiah xxii. 7.)

Q. Did John probably draw the parable under consideration from this phraseology in the Old Testament?

A. He did.

Q. Who did he represent by "the tree," in the parable?

A. The Jewish nation of that age.

Q. Who did he represent by the axe?

A. The Roman armies.

Q. What did he mean by the axe being laid at the foot of the tree?

A. That those armies were ready to enter Judea in hostile array, at any moment God should permit.

Q. What did he signify by the cutting down of the tree, and the casting it into the fire?

A. The overthrow and destruction of the Jewish nation by their Roman enemies.

Q. Did the Romans actually overthrow and destroy the Jews, after the utterance of this parable?

A. They did, in A. D. 70.

Q. Is the application which we have given to this parable supported by commentators of various sects?

A. It is.

Q. What says Dr. Clarke in regard to this construction?

A. He says, "the Jewish nation is the *tree*, and the Romans the *axe*, which, by the just judgment of God, was speedily to cut it down."

Q. Can you name other eminent commentators who support this explanation of the parable?

A. Dr. Lightfoot, Dr. Hammond, Bishop Pearce, Dr. Gill, Le Clerc, and many others.

LESSON V.

Parable of the Fan.

"Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."—(Matt. iii. 12.)

Q. Who was the author of this parable?

A. John the Baptist.

Q. When was it spoken?

A. During the delivery of the same discourse in which he uttered the parable of the Axe.

Q. From what did John draw his figure, in the present parable?

A. From the Jewish manner of threshing and winnowing grain.

Q. Did they go through with this process in the same manner that is practised in our country at the present day?

A. They did not.

Q. Where were their threshing-floors usually situated?

A. Upon some convenient eminence.

Q. Why were they placed upon eminences?

A. That they might be the more exposed to the wind.

Q. How were their threshing-floors prepared?

A. They were simply round and level plats of ground, in the open air.

Q. How was the process of threshing performed?

A. The sheaves being laid in proper order, a heavy sledge, made of thick boards, and furnished beneath with teeth of stone or iron, was drawn over the straw by oxen, which at the same time, threshed out the grain, and cut or broke the straw into a kind of chaff.

Q. In what language does the prophet Isaiah represent the Jewish nation as a threshing instrument?

A. "Behold, I will make thee a new sharp-threshing instrument, having teeth. Thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them."—(Isaiah xli. 15, 16.)

Q. After the grain was sufficiently threshed, what disposition was then made of it?

A. It was thrown into a pile, to await the blowing of the wind, when the wheat was separated from the chaff.

Q. Can you describe the process of separating the wheat from the chaff?

A. While in its mixed state, the grain, with a fork, or fan, as it is translated in the parable, was thrown forcibly some yards into the air against the wind, which driving back the straw and chaff, allowed the wheat to fall separate on the floor.

Q. What was then done with the wheat?

A. It was gathered into granaries, and preserved for future use.

Q. How was the chaff disposed of?

A. Being of no service, it was usually cast into a fire and burnt up.

Q. What important event did John design to represent by this parable?

A. He designed to represent the impending overthrow of the Jews.

Q. To whom did he allude under the figure of the fan or winnowing fork?

A. To the Roman armies, who, under Titus, were the instruments in the hands of God, to effect this disastrous work on his ancient people.

Q. What did he represent by the threshing-floor?

A. The land of Judea.

Q. Who were represented by the wheat?

A. Those who believed in Jesus Christ, when these calamities overtook the Israelites.

Q. Who were represented by the chaff?

A. The unbelieving Jews, who rejected the Messiah and put him to death.

Q. What is meant by the declaration that "he shall gather his wheat into the garner?"

A. In this figure John represents the preservation of the followers of Christ, at the destruction of the Jews.

Q. Were they actually saved at the overthrow of Jerusalem?

A. They were. Observing the signs foretold by the Saviour, they fled from Jerusalem to the city of Pella, where they remained in safety during all the woes which overwhelmed their ill-fated countrymen.

Q. What did John represent by the burning up of the chaff with unquenchable fire?

A. He represented the involving of the Jews in great and sore calamities.

Q. Did such calamities soon overtake them?

A. They did. The Roman armies overrun Judea, and surrounded Jerusalem—the Jews perished in immense numbers—and the survivors were scattered throughout every nation on the earth.

Q. What is the meaning of the phrase “unquenchable fire?”

A. It signifies a fire that burns without quenching, until all the fuel that supplies it, is entirely consumed.

Q. Does it then necessarily go out of its own accord?

Q. To what should the word “unquenchable,” be applied?

A. It should be applied to the *manner* in which the fire burns, and not to the *time*.

Q. What does Dr. Hammond say in reference to this phrase, as used in the parable under consideration?

A. He says, the Jews were in the habit of putting “fire to the chaff at the wind side, and that keeps on and never gives over, till it has consumed all the chaff, and so is a kind of *unquenchable fire*—a fire never quenchable till it hath done its work.”

Q. Does Dr. Lightfoot corroborate the general view we have taken of this parable?

A. He does. He declares that “the main intent of the verse is to show forth the destruction of Jerusalem.”

Q. What is Bishop Pearce’s testimony on this subject?

A. “In this whole verse,” he says, “the destruction of the Jewish state is expressed in the terms of husbandmen.”

Q. Does Kenrick make a similar application of the parable?

A. He does, when he says, “In this whole verse, the destruction of Jerusalem is expressed in the terms

of husbandmen. * * * * Which prophecy was fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans."

LESSON VI.

Parable of the Offending Hand.

"And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell-fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."—(Mark ix. 43—48.)

Q. Who uttered this parable?

A. It was uttered by Jesus Christ.

Q. To whom was it addressed?

A. To his disciples, who alone were with him at the time, in a house at Capernaum.

Q. What was the Saviour's object in speaking these words?

A. It was to warn his followers of the necessity of casting aside every personal habit or gratification, that could prove an obstacle to their giving themselves up wholly to the service of their Master.

Q. Why would it not be proper to understand the language of the parable in a literal sense?

A. Because it would be attributing to Jesus the doctrine that some will enter upon the spiritual existence of another life, deprived of a hand, a foot, or an eye—than which nothing could be more unscriptural or absurd.

Q. How, then, should we view the language of this parable?

A. As highly figurative.

Q. Why did the Redeemer employ such singular figures, as the cutting off the hand, and plucking out the eye?

A. It was to impress his disciples the more deeply with the truths he desired to communicate.

Q. What did the Saviour mean when he called upon his disciples to cut off an offending hand, and pluck out an offending eye?

A. By these bodily organs, he represents *darling sins*; and his meaning was, that however much his disciples might be tempted to any improper habit or any indulgence of a sinful character, they should break away from it entirely—although the sacrifice were like the cutting off a hand, or plucking out an eye.

Q. Do bad habits frequently become deeply seated?

A. They do; and so much so, that to destroy their power, is like cutting off the hand or the foot of the body.

Q. What is Archbishop Newcome's opinion of the phraseology under consideration?

A. He says, "This is a strong eastern manner of expressing that seductions to sin, and particularly stumbling-blocks in the way of openly professing the gospel at that season, should be avoided at all events."

Q. What do you understand by the words "enter into life," as used in this parable?

A. I do not understand them as referring to an entrance upon the immortal state of happiness, in a future world, for the reason already expressed, that it is absurd to suppose that any will enter there, deprived of an eye or a foot. But in the use of this phrase, I understand the Saviour as signifying an entrance into the belief of his gospel.

Q. Have you any Scripture evidence of the correctness of this construction?

A. There are several passages where the word "life" is evidently used in this manner.

Q. Can you quote them?

A. Upon a certain occasion Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."—(John vi. 63.) At another time he exclaimed, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."—(John v. 24.)

Q. Is there other testimony of like character?

A. There is. Jesus declared, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."—(John xvii. 3.) The Apostle John also uses similar language: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren: he that loveth not his brother abideth in death."—(1 John iii. 14.)

Q. What do we learn from these passages?

A. We learn that the phrases "life eternal," "everlasting life," "passed from death unto life," are used to represent an adoption of the doctrines proclaimed by Jesus Christ; and that hence, there is the utmost propriety in giving the same meaning to the similar phrase in the parable before us.

Q. How should we understand the words "enter into the kingdom of God," as used in the latter part of the parable?

A. In the same manner as the phrase "enter into life," already explained. The terms are perfectly synonymous, as may be seen by comparing verses 43 and 47.

Q. Is this term, "kingdom of heaven," or "kingdom of God," used in other places to represent the

spiritual, or gospel kingdom, which Jesus established on the earth?

A. It is. "From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is *at hand*."—(Matt. iv. 17.) On a certain occasion Jesus, addressing the Jews, said, "The kingdom of God is *come unto you*."—(Matt. xii. 28.) At another time, he exclaimed, "Behold the kingdom of God is *within you*."—(Luke xvii. 21.) Other passages of like character might be quoted. (See Matt. iii. 2; x. 7.)

Q. What does Dr. Adam Clarke say upon this phrase?

A. He says, the kingdom of heaven, "and the kingdom of God, mean the same thing, viz., the dispensation of infinite mercy, and manifestation of eternal truth, by Christ Jesus."

Q. What farther does he say on the subject?

A. He makes the following inquiries and answers: "But why is it called a *kingdom*? Because it has *laws*—all the moral precepts of the gospel: its *subjects*, all who believe in Christ Jesus; and its *king*, the Sovereign of heaven and earth. But why is it called the kingdom of *heaven*? Because God designed that his kingdom of grace *here*, should resemble the kingdom of glory *above*."

LESSON VII. -

Parable of the Offending Hand—Continued.

Q. How are we to arrive at the meaning of the word *hell*, as used in this parable?

A. Not by taking the view of it, which is the most popular at the present day, but by striving to ascertain how the Saviour understood it, when he uttered it.

Q. What is the most proper way to obtain this important information?

A. By endeavoring to learn the origin of the phrase under consideration.

Q. What is the original word which the translators of our English Bible have rendered *hell*, in this parable?

A. It is the Greek word *Gehenna*.

Q. What is the derivation of *Gehenna*?

A. It is derived from two Hebrew words, *Gee*, (valley,) and *Hinnom*, (the name of the owner of the valley.) These words united make *Gee Hinnom*, (*Gehenna*,) the valley of *Hinnom*.

Q. What does Professor Stuart say of the situation of this valley?

A. He says "the valley of *Hinnom* is a part (the eastern section) of the pleasant wadi or valley, which bounds Jerusalem on the south."

Q. What does he say of the uses to which this valley was put in ancient times?

A. "Here, in ancient times, and under some of the idolatrous kings, the worship of *Moloch*, the horrid idol god of the *Ammonites*, was practised. To this idol children were offered in sacrifice."

Q. How does he describe the appearance of the image of the god *Moloch*, and the manner of sacrificing to it?

A. "If we may credit the *Rabbins*, the head of the idol was like that of an ox; while the rest of its body resembled that of a man. It was hollow within; and being heated by fire, children were laid in its arms, and were there literally roasted alive."

Q. What other name was the valley of *Hinnom* known by anciently?

A. *Schleusner*, a German commentator, says, "In *Jeremiah vii. 31*, this valley is called *Tophet*, from the Hebrew *Toph*, a drum; because the priests in those horrible rites, beat drums, lest the wailings and

ones of the infants who were burned, should be heard by those standing around."

Q. Who abolished the worship of Moloch and other heathen idols, into which the Jews had fallen?

A. The good king Josiah, as we learn in 2 Kings xxiii. 10.

Q. To what use was Gehenna (the valley of Hinnom) afterwards put?

A. Professor Stuart says, that "after these [idolatrous] sacrifices had ceased, the place was desecrated, and made one of loathing and horror. The pious king Josiah caused it to be polluted—that is, he caused to be carried there the filth of the city of Jerusalem. It would seem that the custom of desecrating this place, thus happily begun, was continued in after ages, down to the period when our Saviour was on earth. *Perpetual fires* were kept up, in order to consume the offal which was deposited there."

Q. Was this Gehenna (valley of Hinnom) ever used for the punishment of criminals?

A. It was. Professor Stuart, and other eminent writers, declare that this valley was not only desecrated in the manner described, but it came to be the place where malefactors were executed by *burning to death*.

Q. Is it natural to suppose that a place which was thus defiled, which was filled with the offals of the city, and made the place where the dreadful punishment of burning alive was inflicted, would become a loathing to the Jews?

A. It is. And we learn that they viewed it with great dislike and horror.

Q. Did the Jews, at length, come to use the name of this detested valley of Hinnom, or Gehenna, as emblematical of the severe judgments or woes, which God brings upon the wicked in this life?

A. They did. Schleusner says that "every severe punishment, and particularly every ignominious kind

of death, was called by the name of *Gehenna*”—or hell. And the prophet Jeremiah, in describing the calamities that should come upon Jerusalem, declares that it shall be “as *Tophet*”—or *Geheena*.

Q. Is there any proof that the Saviour, or the Jews in his day, ever used the word *Gehenna*, or hell, to signify a place of endless wretchedness?

A. There is no proof of this description.

Q. What evidence is relied upon by believers in that sentiment, to prove that *Gehenna* was used to denote a place of ceaseless wo?

A. The manner in which this word is used in the Targums, or commentaries, of Jewish writers, who are supposed to have lived near the days of the Saviour.

Q. How do these Targums fall short of proving the point in question?

A. They fail, because it is not at all certain that any of them were written in the days of Christ. It is the opinion of Bauer and Jahn, that the oldest of these Targums were not written until the *second* or *third* century of the Christian era; in which case they afford no evidence of the meaning attached to *Gehenna* by the Redeemer.

Q. Are the words, valley of Hinnom, or *Gehenna*, or *Tophet*, ever used in the Old Testament, as signifying a place of endless suffering?

A. They are not. No evidence to this effect, can be adduced.

Q. How are these words used in the Old Testament?

A. They are used as signifying temporal punishment and calamity.

Q. Is there any evidence, or any probability, that the meaning of these words had changed between the days of the Old Testament writers and the advent of the Redeemer?

A. There is no evidence whatever of this description.

Q. What meaning, then, are we bound to suppose the Saviour attached to these words when he used them?

A. We are bound to believe he used them precisely as they are used in the Old Testament, viz., to signify temporal calamity and distress.

Q. With these explanations before us, how should we understand the words "cast into hell," as used in the parable under consideration?

A. We may understand them either literally, as signifying being cast into the valley of Hinnom to be burned to death, or figuratively, as becoming involved in calamities and woes, in consequence of sinful gratifications.

Q. How should we understand the phrase "where their worm dieth not?"

A. We should understand it as indicative of the intensity of the punishments inflicted. Professor Stuart describes the origin of this phrase.

Q. What is his language?

A. He says, "Perpetual fires were kept up [in the valley of Hinnom, or Gehenna] in order to consume the offal which was deposited there. And as the same offal would breed worms, (for so all putrifying meat of course does,) hence came the expression, *where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*"

Q. How should we understand the words, "the fire that never shall be quenched?"

A. In the quotation above, Professor Stuart declares that this expression arose from the circumstance, that *perpetual* fires were kept burning in Gehenna, to consume the offal of Jerusalem.*

* Let the scholar consult the answer to a similar question in Lesson V.

Q. Where was it that the worm died not, and the fire was not quenched?

A. In the valley of Hinnom, or Gehenna.

Q. What is the general instruction we should understand the Saviour as imparting to his disciples in this parable?

A. We should understand him as instructing them, that it was better for them to put away all habits, all practices, all inclinations, however strong or dear, that would interfere in the way of their duty as his disciples, and enter into the life and enjoyment of the gospel, than by indulging in those habits and inclinations, be led thereby to neglect their duty, apostatize from their Master, and become involved in the dreadful woes which were soon to come upon the Jews for their wickedness.

Q. Were those followers of Christ who apostatized from him, involved in the calamities that soon afterwards overwhelmed the Jewish nation?

A. We are informed by historians that they were. They were cast into *Gehenna*—into a scene of distress, and suffering, and awful horror, such as the world has never witnessed in any other instance.

LESSON VIII.

Parable of the Strait Gate.

“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because, strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”—(Matt. vii. 13, 14.)

Q. Where is this parable found?

A. In the Sermon on the Mount.

Q. By whom was that sermon delivered?

A. By Jesus Christ.

Q. Why is it called *the Sermon on the Mount*?

A. Because the Redeemer was upon a certain mountain with his disciples, when he uttered it.

Q. To whom did he particularly address himself in this sermon?

A. To his disciples.

Q. What construction has long been put on this parable by several denominations?

A. It has been supposed to refer to a future world, and to designate that the number saved will be few, and the number finally lost forever, will be very numerous.

Q. Is there anything in the parable or in the context, which necessarily requires such a construction?

A. There is not.

Q. Why, then, has this construction been put upon it?

A. Because men have drawn their opinion of its meaning from human creeds, rather than from the Scriptures.

Q. Does the construction referred to conflict with the present opinions of the same class that originated it?

A. It does. Many of this class now believe that the number finally lost will be *very few* in comparison to the number saved—as few as the felons in prison are, in comparison to the whole body of community.

Q. Does this belief destroy the supposition that the parable under consideration refers to a future life?

A. It does, most effectually.

Q. What is the literal meaning of the word *destruction*?

A. Its strictly literal meaning is *annihilation*.

Q. Is *destruction* ever used in the Bible, to signify a condition of endless unhappiness?

A. It is not, in any instance.

Q. How is it used in the Scriptures?

A. It is invariably used to indicate temporal calamity, wretchedness and ruin.

Q. Can you give an instance of this use of the word?

A. St. Paul, in speaking of sinners, says, "destruction and misery are *in* their ways."—(Rom. iii. 16.)

Q. Should we not give this construction to the word *destruction*, in the parable under consideration?

A. We should.

Q. What should be understood by the phrase, "*leadeth unto life*?"

A. The same signification should be attached to these words, as to the phrase "enter into life," in the parable of the Offending Hand; i. e. an entrance into the belief of the gospel, or into the enjoyment of the spiritual life, which the follower of Jesus experiences in this world.

Q. Will you give an example of this use of the word *life*?

A. St. Paul says, "to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is *life* and peace."—(Rom. viii. 6.)

Q. Is the phraseology of this parable drawn from familiar sayings and modes of speech, in use among the Jews and other ancient nations?

A. It is.

Q. In what figurative sense was the word "gate" used by them?

A. Dr. Clarke says, "Gate, among the Jews, signifies, metaphorically, the entrance, introduction or means of acquiring anything. So they talk of the gate of repentance, the gate of prayers, and the gate of tears."

Q. How does St. Paul use the word *door* or *gate*?

A. In reference to his preaching the gospel at Ephesus, he says, "A great *door*, [or gate] and

effectual, is opened unto me.”—(1 Cor. xvi. 9.) It is also said, in relation to his preaching the gospel at Antioch, that “God had opened the *door* [or gate] of faith unto the Gentiles.”—(Acts xiv. 27.)

Q. What is the language of an ancient philosopher, as quoted by Le Clerc?

A. “Do you see that small gate, and the path leading thereto, little frequented, and trodden by very few, and appearing steep, and rough, and craggy? This is the way that leads to true knowledge.”

Q. What do you say of this language of the ancient philosopher?

A. It resembles very much the phraseology of the parable now under consideration.

Q. May it truly be said of anything difficult to attain, that the entrance to it is by a narrow way, and a strait gate?

A. It may; but this does not *necessarily* imply that there are those who can *never* attain it. The phraseology but indicates the *difficulty* of the undertaking.

Q. But does not the Saviour say, “few there be that find” the way and the gate which lead to life?

A. He says, few there *be*, but he *does not* say, few there *will be* that find it. There were but *few*, indeed, in the days of Christ, that then found the way of life; but there is nothing in the parable to contradict the belief, that *many* or *all* may, “in the fulness of times,” find that way; neither is there anything to contradict the belief, that hereafter the gate may become wide, and the way broad, that lead to life.

Q. How do you understand the Saviour as speaking, in regard to time?

A. I understand him as speaking of things as they *then* were, and not as they may or will be hereafter.

Q. What important moral precept did Jesus utter immediately preceding the parable before us?

A. In the verse next before the parable, he says,

"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them : for this is the law and the prophets." (Matt. vii. 12.)

Q. Is it not a reasonable supposition that the Redeemer referred to this commandment, as the strait gate and narrow way, which lead to the spiritual life of the gospel ?

A. It is.

Q. What is the language of Dr. Adam Clarke on this point ?

A. He says, "The words in the original are very emphatic : Enter in through *this* strait gate, i. e. of doing to every one, as you would he should do unto you ; for *this alone* seems to be the *strait gate* which our Lord alludes to."

Q. How is the commandment above quoted, generally viewed ?

A. It is universally conceded that it is one very difficult to be fulfilled.

Q. May it well be compared to a strait gate and narrow way ?

A. It may.

Q. What does Dr. Clarke say in regard to the keeping of this precept ?

A. "None but he whose heart is filled with love to God and all mankind, can keep this precept, either in its spirit or letter. Self-love will feel itself *sadly cramped* when brought within the limits of this precept."

Q. Can any enter into the spiritual life of the gospel, except through the practice of this precept ?

Q. Will not men continue to enjoy spiritual life, so long as they obey this precept ?

Q. If the keeping of this commandment is the way that leads to life, what is the way that leads to destruction ?

A. The violation of this commandment,

Q. Do not the great majority of mankind still violate this precept, to a greater or less extent?

Q. May not this violation be properly called a "broad way," and may it not truly be said, that "many there be which go in thereat?"

Q. Do not men bring destruction and wretchedness upon themselves, by *refusing* to do unto others as they would have others do unto them?

Q. Can any become involved in sin and its unhappy consequences, except by thus refusing?

LESSON IX.

Parable of the Unclean Spirit.

"When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return unto my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation."—Matt. xii. 43—45.

Q. What has this parable been supposed by some to teach?

A. It has been supposed to teach the personal existence of demons, or devils, or evil spirits from another world, and that these devils can take possession of the human body, and torment it.

Q. Is it well to receive this as the doctrine of the Bible, without a critical examination?

Q. If there are such beings as demons or evil spirits in existence, who must have made them?

A. They must have been made by God.

Q. If they have power to take possession of the bodies of mankind and afflict them, from whom did they obtain this power?

A. They could only have received it from the Creator.

Q. Is it a reasonable supposition that a holy and benevolent God would create wicked spirits, to go forth on the earth, and endow them with power to afflict his intelligent offspring?

Q. If people were actually taken possession of by wicked, invisible spirits in ancient times, is it not remarkable that nothing of the kind takes place in our own day?

Q. Did the Jews, in the time of the Saviour, believe in the existence of multitudes of demons?

A. They did.

Q. What were their views in relation to the nature of these evil beings?

A. They believed them to be the spirits of deceased wicked men, which were permitted to return to the earth and torment mankind.

Q. From whom did the Jews obtain this doctrine of *demonology*?

A. From the heathen, who believed the very atmosphere was filled with the spirits of the dead.

Q. Did the heathen believe in a great variety of demons?

A. They did. They had their good and evil demons—their celestial, ærial, aquatic, terrestrial, and subterranean demons.

Q. Are such views founded in reason?

Q. Are there any in Christian lands, who now believe these heathen notions to be true?

A. There are few, if any.

Q. Do not the enlightened of all sects, unite in rejecting the belief in these heathen demons, as absurd in the extreme?

A. They do.

Q. What conclusion must we draw from this fact?

A. If it is allowed that the demons believed in by the heathen, were fabulous beings, existing only in their benighted imaginations, consistency requires us to allow that the same notions, when adopted by the Jews, were also erroneous.

Q. Can sentiments which are false and absurd when believed by heathen, become true and reasonable when adopted by Jews or Christians?

Q. But is it not said repeatedly, in the New Testament, that the Saviour cast out devils?

A. It is.

Q. How are we to understand these declarations?

A. We should understand them in an accommodated sense—as teaching that Jesus did certain miracles, which the people who witnessed them, *believed* to be *casting out demons*; but we are not necessarily to suppose that the persons upon whom these miracles were performed were actually possessed with demons, or the spirits of deceased wicked men.

Q. If there were really no demons to be cast out, why did not the Redeemer correct the Jews, when they called so many of his miracles the casting out of these imaginary beings?

A. The reasons for this are many and obvious.

Q. Can you name some of them?

A. Jesus evidently did not deem it necessary or important to undertake to correct all the erroneous and absurd notions of that age. The Jews were exceedingly superstitious and bigotted. They entertained a vast variety of dogmas of the most unreasonable and foolish description. Had Christ turned his attention to these minor errors, and endeavored to banish from the minds of the people all the absurdities they cherished, it would have occupied his whole time and attention.

Q. What different course did he prefer to follow?

A. Rather than to spend his time upon the multi-

tude of these *lesser* errors, he deemed it more important to correct the *greater* errors which the Jews entertained in regard to the character of God, and the principles by which he is governed in his dealings with the world, and to devote his whole energy to the establishment of his gospel among men ; knowing that wherever that gospel prevailed it would unavoidably sweep away this doctrine of demons, and all like false notions.

Q. Has the spread of the gospel proved this position true ?

A. It has ; wherever the gospel prevails, all heathen notions and false doctrines vanish away.

Q. What would have been the result, if the Redeemer had turned his attention more particularly to the correcting of the Jewish notions in relation to demons ?

A. We have no reason to take it for granted he would have been successful in this effort. If they would not believe him to be the Son of God, when his assertion was substantiated by his stupendous miracles, it is not to be supposed they would have believed his bare declaration that their doctrine of demons was a wretched error stolen from the heathen.

Q. Did not Jesus sometimes refer to false notions which the Jews entertained, without deeming it important to correct them ?

A. He did.

Q. Can you give an instance of this description ?

A. On a certain occasion the Pharisees accused Christ of casting out devils, or demons, by the power of " Beelzebub, the prince of devils." In reply he exclaimed, " If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out ? "

Q. What was Beelzebub ?

A. It was an *idol*, worshipped at Ekron, as the god of flies.

Q. Did the Jews believe this idol possessed great power?

A. They did. They supposed he had power to give the ability of casting out all other devils. So high a rank did he hold in their estimation, that they called him "the prince of devils," or demons.

Q. Are we not bound to believe the Jews were laboring under a great error in supposing this heathen idol was actually a living and wicked spirit, and really possessed power and ability?

A. We are.

Q. Was not the Redeemer aware that they believed this palpable and gross error?

A. He undoubtedly was.

Q. Did he, when accused of casting out devils by Beelzebub, correct their heathen notions on this subject, and instruct them that this god was but a senseless idol?

A. He did not; but allowed them to remain still believing Beelzebub to be "the prince of devils."

Q. Is it not just as surprising that he did not do this, as that he did not correct the prevailing opinion in regard to demons in general?

A. It is. If he had thought it important to correct the one error, he would the other.

Q. What inference are we to draw from the well-known nature of this Beelzebub?

A. If Beelzebub, "the prince of devils," was a fabulous being, possessing no actual existence, and having no power, we must conclude that his whole retinue—all other devils or demons—are of the same nature, existing only in the imaginations of the barbarous and unenlightened.

Q. Who were those from whom it is said Jesus cast out devils?

A. They were undoubtedly persons afflicted with insanity, epilepsy, St. Vitus' dance, and other strange maladies.

Q. Were the ancients in the habit of attributing diseases to the influence of demons?

A. They were. When the malady was of a remarkable description, such as insanity, idiocy, or diseases that produce contortions of body, it was supposed that a demon had taken possession of the individual, and that he could not recover unless the evil spirit was cast out.

Q. What did the Jews suppose had taken place, in witnessing a remarkable cure?

A. When they saw those who were raging with insanity, or whose bodies were thrown into convulsions upon the least excitement, instantly cured by the miraculous power of Christ, they believed and said he had cast out a demon—when in reality he had but removed the disease which afflicted them.

Q. What does Josephus say in regard to curing those said to be possessed of demons?

A. In speaking of a remarkable root called *baaras*, which it was difficult to procure, he says, "Yet after all this pains in getting, it is only valuable on account of one virtue it hath, that if it only be brought to *sick* persons, it quickly drives away those called *demons*, which are no other than the spirits of the wicked, that enter into men that are alive, and kill them, unless they can obtain some help against them."

Q. What does this quotation show?

A. It clearly shows that what was attributed to demons, was but a *physical disease*, which was cured by this remarkable vegetable.

Q. What does Dr. Clarke say upon this subject?

A. He says, "Many eminent men think that the sacred writers accommodated themselves to the unfounded prejudices of the common people, in attributing certain diseases to the influence of evil spirits, which were merely the effects of natural causes."

Q. What is the language of Dr. Lightfoot?

A. "These words, ['Taketh with himself seven other spirits,' &c.,] seem to have been spoken by our Saviour according to the capacity of the common people, or rather according to the deceit put upon them, more than according to the reality or truth of the thing itself; taking a parable from something commonly believed and entertained, that he might express the thing which he propounded, more plainly and familiarly."

Q. Can you name some distinguished writers, who have sustained this view of the subject?

A. Among many others may be named Heinsius, Mede, Sykes, Mead, Farmer, and Lardner.

LESSON X.

Parable of the Unclean Spirit—Continued.

Q. Did not Jesus sometimes use the same phraseology in restoring those who were afflicted with a well-known disease, as in curing those supposed to be possessed with demons?

A. He did.

Q. Can you give an instance of this description?

A. "And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a *great fever*: and they besought him for her. And he stood over her and *rebuked the fever*; and it left her."—(Luke iv. 38, 39.)

Q. What do you say of this phraseology?

A. It instructs us that the Redeemer *rebuked* and *cast out* diseases, in the same manner that he rebuked and cast out what were supposed to be demons—from which a well-grounded inference can be drawn, that the latter cases were bodily diseases, of a pecu-

liar character, which Jewish superstition attributed to evil spirits.

Q. Is there more than one original word in the Greek, which the translators have rendered *devil* or *devils*?

A. There is.

Q. Can you name them?

A. They are *diabolos*, and *daimon*, or *daimonion*.

Q. What is the literal signification of *diabolos*?

A. It signifies an accuser; a slanderer.

Q. What is the meaning of *daimon*, or *daimonion*?

A. These are Greek words, literally meaning *demon*, or *demons*—the souls of deceased wicked men.

Q. Is *devil* and *devils* the proper translation of *daimon* and *daimonion*?

A. It is not. Dr. Clarke says that our common version, which gives these translations, is not strictly correct.

Q. How should *daimon* and *daimonion* be translated?

A. They should be translated *demon* and *demons*—i. e. the spirits of the dead.

Q. Did our translators err in this respect?

A. They undoubtedly did. They had no authority in the original Greek, to use the word *devils* as a translation of *daimonion*. This translation should not have been found in the Bible; but, in its stead, the word *demons* should have been used.

Q. Is it ever said in the Bible, that men are possessed of *diabolos*—the *devil*?

A. It is not. *Demons*, the souls of the deceased, are only spoken of as taking possession of men. But there is no reason to believe in the *reality* of this supposition, as has been shown.

Q. From what words are *spirit* and *spirits*, translated, as used in the parable under consideration?

A. From the Greek words *pneuma* and *pneumata*.

Q. What is the signification of these words?

A. They signify, soul, spirit, disposition of mind, temper, feelings.

Q. Are these words ever translated *devil*, or *devils*?

A. They are not.

Q. Do they ever have a meaning similar to *diabolos*, or *devil*?

A. They do not.

Q. Can you quote a passage where these words are used in their different senses?

A. "And Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, [*pneumatos agiou*,] returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit [*pneumati*] into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil, [*diabolu*.]—(Luke iv. 1, 2.)

Q. When the Saviour, in this parable, spoke of an "unclean spirit," and "seven other spirits," are we to suppose he intended to teach the actual and personal existence of invisible, wicked spirits?

A. We are not.

Q. Why did he make use of this language?

A. He used it in conformity to the prevailing notions of that day, not to endorse those notions, but through them to convey great and important truths.

Q. What does Kenrick say upon this point?

A. He says, "Christ here speaks, all along, upon the principles of his hearers, making use of a common notion concerning demons, to illustrate the truth of what he was going to say respecting the Jews."

Q. Why did he put his language in the form of a parable or narrative?

A. That he might secure the more fixed attention of his hearers.

Q. What application should be given to this parable?

A. It may be applied to the Jewish nation, and also to individuals. Commentators do not perfectly agree upon this subject.

Q. What are Grotius' views of the parable?

A. He supposes it refers to the Jews, at two important eras in their history ; viz., their Babylonish captivity, and their final overthrow by the Romans.

Q. How does he explain the different portions of the parable ?

A. He says the Jews, before their captivity in Babylon, were exceedingly wicked, as may be seen in the prophets. This sinfulness is represented by a man having an unclean spirit, or a wicked disposition.

Q. How does he then proceed ?

A. During their captivity, many began to reform, and, under a superintending Providence, returned to their native land. This amended condition is represented in the parable by the unclean spirit going out of the man, and by the house being "empty, swept, and garnished."

Q. How does he apply the return of the unclean spirit, accompanied by the seven additional spirits ?

A. After the return from the Babylonish captivity the Jews became not only as wicked as formerly, but, in the process of time, in the days of Christ, had become vastly more corrupt and sinful than ever—insomuch that they even put their own promised Messiah to death. This relapse into greater wickedness, is represented by the return of the original unclean spirit, accompanied by seven spirits still more unclean and wicked.

Q. What is meant by the last state of the man being worse than the first ?

A. That the condition of the Jews, after having become thus awfully wicked, would be much more miserable than during their captivity in Babylon.

Q. Did the event prove the justness of this declaration ?

A. It did. The horrors of the captivity could not compare with those which preyed upon the Jews at their final overthrow and dispersion.

Q. Do other commentators make a different application of the parable, as to time?

A. They do. Kenrick supposes it refers to the wickedness of the Jews when John the Baptist began to preach—to the partial reformation of that nation, under the personal ministry of the Messiah—and to the still greater wickedness into which they relapsed after the death of Christ, which finally led to their temporal ruin.

Q. What construction does Wynne put upon this parable?

A. “The Jews, instead of growing better, will grow seven times worse than before, as a natural and judicial consequence of their rejecting the Messiah and his offers of grace. We find, by Josephus, that this was remarkably the case.”

Q. Is it evident that the Saviour himself intended this parable as applicable to the Jews?

A. It is, from the declaration at the conclusion—“Even so shall it be also, unto this wicked generation.”

Q. May the parable be applied, with propriety, to wicked individuals in their attempts to reform?

A. It may be considered applicable to many cases.

Q. When men addicted to wicked habits, make an effort to reform, are they always successful?

A. They are not. It is not uncommon to see them, after a brief continuance in well-doing, relapse again into their course of evil.

Q. What is their condition then?

A. When the sinful return, under these circumstances, to their evil ways, they generally plunge far deeper, if possible, into wickedness than ever before.

Q. What are the words of Peter which illustrate these views?

A. “For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled

therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning."—(2 Pet. ii. 20.)

LESSON XI.

Parable of the Wheat and the Tares.

"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, the kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field. But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then, hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest, I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn."—Matt. xiii. 24—30.

Q. From what did Jesus draw this parable?

A. From the agricultural pursuits of the Jews.

Q. What description of grain was the *wheat* mentioned in the parable?

A. It was probably the same kind of grain that now bears that name among us.

Q. Are not some of the Scripture names for grain liable to be misunderstood?

A. They are. The word *corn*, is of this description. We confine the meaning of this word entirely to *maize*, or *Indian corn*. But in the Bible, *corn* is used as a general term, signifying various kinds of grain. Maize, or Indian corn, is supposed to have been entirely unknown to the ancients.

Q. What description of plant were tares?

A. They were a useless, if not a hurtful species of grain. They are described as having an appearance quite similar to wheat or barley. The kernel is smaller than that of the wheat, and having but a slight covering of chaff, it is easily shaken out and scattered abroad. It is still found in Eastern countries.

Q. Is this plant separated from the wheat as soon as it appears in the field?

A. It is not. It could not be pulled up without great injury to the wheat; but is allowed to grow until the harvest.

Q. How is it then separated?

A. After reaping, the tares are separated from the wheat, by hand; the former is bound in bundles and burned, while the latter is gathered into barns and preserved for use.

Q. What is the best explanation of the parable under consideration?

A. It is that given by the Saviour himself.

Q. To whom did he give this explanation?

A. To his disciples, who came to him in private, and desired to understand the meaning of the parable.

Q. Can you repeat the language of this explanation?

A. "He answered and said unto them, he that soweth the good seed, is the Son of man. The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one. The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels."

Q. What farther does he say, in his explanation?

A. "As, therefore, the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so it shall be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels,

and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity. And shall cast them into a furnace of fire : there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”—(Matt. xiii. 37—43.)

Q. Why is it necessary that this *explanation* should be *explained*?

A. Because of the erroneous doctrines which this language of the Redeemer has been brought to support.

Q. What course will it be the most proper to pursue in our farther investigations of this parable?

A. As the Saviour has given us his explanation of the parable, it will be necessary to confine ourselves exclusively to this explanation.

Q. Who sowed the good seed?

A. “He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man.”

Q. Who was the Son of man?

A. It was Jesus Christ. He frequently gives himself this title.

Q. What was the field in which he sowed this good seed?

A. “The field is the world.”

Q. What is the original Greek word which is translated *world*, in this place?

A. It is *kosmos*.

Q. What is the meaning of this word?

A. It signifies literally, the earth.

Q. What was “the good seed?”

A. “The good seed are the children of the kingdom.”

Q. How should we understand this sentence?

A. By “the good seed” we may understand the *doctrines* which Jesus proclaimed to mankind; and we may moreover understand the phrase as compre-

hending also those persons who embraced his doctrines—"the children of the kingdom" literally signifying those who had entered the gospel kingdom of Christ.

Q. Who were the tares?

A. "The tares are the children of the wicked *one*."

Q. Why is the word *one*, in this passage, printed in *italic* letters?

A. Because it is not to be found in the original language of the passage, but was supplied by the translators.

Q. How should we view words printed in this manner throughout the Bible?

A. We should always understand that they have been supplied by the translators, to fill out what *they* considered the meaning of the original. But these words are not to be considered as *inspired*, and may always be *omitted* when the sense seems to call for it.

Q. Is the word "*one*," necessarily required in the sentence under consideration?

A. It is not. The full meaning of the Saviour is undoubtedly conveyed without it,—"*the tares are the children of the wicked.*"

Q. What meaning should we attach to these words?

A. We may understand them as referring to a certain class of corrupt persons, who, for various reasons had mingled among the followers of Christ, and pretended to have been converted to Christianity, but who nevertheless, had none of the principles of the gospel within them. And the whole object of the parable was to designate the time and the manner in which these wicked ones were to be separated from the true disciples, and punished for their iniquities.

Q. Who was the enemy that sowed the tares among the wheat?

A. "The enemy that soweth them is the devil."

Q. What is the original word, which is here rendered *devil*?

A. It is *diabolos*—which signifies, literally, an accuser, a slanderer, an opponent.

Q. What is the original word that is translated *satan*, in the New Testament.

A. It is *satana*—which signifies an adversary, an enemy.

Q. Should we understand either the words *devil* or *satan*, when used in the Bible, as referring to a fallen angel, an invisible wicked spirit, or solely to any one being or personage?

A. We should not. These words are not confined to a single being, but are used indiscriminately to signify any wicked or ill-disposed individual.

Q. Can you give me an instance where *satan* means a human being?

A. "But he [Jesus] turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, *satan*; thou art an offence unto me."—(Matt. xvi. 23.) Here Satan means one of the apostles of Christ.

Q. Can you give me an instance where the word *devil* signifies another of the disciples of Jesus?

A. "Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a *devil*?" [*diabolos*.]—(John vi. 70.)

Q. Are there instances where the wives of *deacons*, and other women, are exhorted not to become *diabolos*, devils?

A. There are. "Even so must their wives be grave, not *slanderers*, [*diabolos*,] sober, faithful in all things."—(1 Tim. iii. 11.) "The aged women, likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not *false accusers*, [*diabolos*,] not given to much wine, teachers of good things."—(Titus ii. 3. See also 2 Tim. iii. 3.)

Q. What do we learn from these examples?

A. We learn that *satan* and *devil* simply mean any wicked person, a slanderer, an accuser, an enemy—or the wicked and corrupt *dispositions* and *feelings* which people sometimes possess; and hence should never be understood as signifying an invisible or infernal spirit, or fallen angel.

Q. What should we understand by the word *devil*, as used in the passage under consideration?

A. We should understand it as signifying a selfish, deceptive, and corrupt spirit in many, which led them to profess to be the disciples of Jesus, while they were but designing hypocrites, possessing none of the principles of the gospel.

Q. What is the *harvest*, when the wheat and the tares are to be gathered?

A. "The harvest is the end of the world."

Q. Is the word *world*, in this sentence, translated from the same original word *kosmos*, as *world* in the first part of the passage now under consideration?

A. It is not.

Q. From what is *world* translated in this sentence?

A. From the Greek word *aionos*. The original sentence is, *sunteleia tou aionos*,—"end of the world."

Q. What is the literal signification of this word *aionos*?

A. It signifies *an age*, an *indefinite period of time*.

Q. How then should we understand this phrase "end of the world?"

A. We should understand it as signifying, not the end of the *world* or *earth*, but as the end of that *age*.

Q. Are there other passages where "the end of the world" is spoken of?

A. There are. "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"—[*aionos*.]—(Matt. xxiv. 3.) "They are written for *our* admonition, upon whom *the ends of the world* [*aionion*] are

come.”—(1 Cor. x. 11.) “And lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,” [*aionos*.]—Matt. xxviii. 20.) “But now once in the end of the world, [*aionion*,] hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”—(Heb. ix. 26.)

Q. Does “the end of the world,” in these passages, mean the end of our earth?

A. It does not. It signifies the end of the Jewish age.

Q. Did St. Paul and those to whom he wrote his epistles, live near the end of the Jewish age?

A. They did.

Q. Was Christ *with* his disciples, giving them the power of miracles, until the end of the Jewish age?

A. He was.

Q. Do the Scriptures say anything about the *kosmos*, earth, or world, coming to an end?

A. They do not.

LESSON XII.

Parable of the Wheat and Tares—Continued.

Q. Is there any other original word which our translators have rendered *world*?

A. There is.

Q. What is it, and its meaning?

A. It is *oikoumene*—which signifies the inhabitable part of the globe.

Q. Can you give a passage where this word occurs?

A. “And it came to pass in these days, that there went out a decree from Cesar Augustus, that all the world [*oikoumene*] should be taxed.”—(Luke ii. 1. See also Matt. xxiv. 14.)

Q. Can you repeat a passage where the word *kosmos* is found?

A. "For God sent not his Son into the world [*kosmon*] to condemn the world, [*kosmon*,] but that the world [*kosmos*] through him might be saved."—(John iii. 17.) "I came not to judge the world, [*kosmon*,] but to save the world" [*kosmon*.]—(John xii. 47.)

Q. Will you quote a passage where the word *aioni* is translated world?

A. "But whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, [*aioni*—age,] neither in the *world* [added by the translators] to come, or *age* to come."—(Matt. xii. 32.)

Q. What do we learn from these several passages?

A. We learn that the word *world* is translated from various original words, and that it has very different meanings in different places in the New Testament.

Q. What does this show the necessity of?

A. It shows the necessity of striving to understand the Scriptures, so as not to attach the same meaning to words of very different signification.

Q. Do those err who think the word *world* means the same thing when translated from *kosmos*, *aion*, and *oikoumene*?

A. They do; and this error must lead them to the belief of great absurdities.

Q. What does Bishop Porteus say of the phrase, *sunteleia tou aionos*, which, in the passage under consideration, is translated, "*end of the world*?"

A. He says, by this phrase "is to be understood, not the final consummation of all things here below, but the end of *that age*, the end of the Jewish state and polity; the subversion of their city, temple and government."

Q. Who are to be the reapers when the harvest spoken of arrives?

A. "The reapers are the angels."

Q. What is usually understood by the word *angel*?

A. It is generally supposed to mean, invariably, a spiritual being, belonging to another world.

Q. Is this exclusive signification correct?

A. It is not. In the Scriptures, *angel* sometimes means a spiritual being, and sometimes a human being still dwelling in the flesh.

Q. What is the original word for *angel*?

A. It is translated from the Greek word *aggelo* or *aggelos*—which signifies simply a *messenger*.

Q. How are we to understand when the word refers to spiritual beings, and when to human beings?

A. By the general sense of the passage in which it is found.

Q. Can you quote a passage where *angel* signifies a spiritual being?

A. "And the *angel* answering, said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God."—(Luke i. 19.) "And the *angel* said unto them, Fear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."—(Luke ii. 10.)

Q. Can you repeat a passage where *angel* evidently means a human *messenger*?

A. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained *angels* [*aggelous*—*messengers*] unawares."—(Heb. xiii. 2.) "Unto the *angel* [*aggelo*—*messenger*] of the church of Ephesus write."—(Rev. ii. 1. See also John v. 4.)

Q. Who were the *angels* which Jesus represents as the reapers?

A. They were the *messengers* or *agents* by whom the Redeemer separated his true followers from the false, and by whom, also, he cast the latter

into that punishment, which is represented as a furnace of fire.

Q. Who were these *messengers* or *agents*?

A. They were those, who, at the *end of that age*, destroyed the Jewish city and nation—in which destruction all those were involved who had proved unfaithful to the Redeemer.

Q. What was to be done with the *tares*, or those wicked persons who had pretended to be the disciples of Christ?

A. They were to be “cast into a *furnace of fire*: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

Q. Should we understand this declaration in a *literal* or a *figurative* sense?

A. In a figurative sense. A “furnace of fire” is a striking emblem of great punishment; and “wailing and gnashing of teeth,” is a figure representing the intensity of the suffering experienced by those upon whom that punishment is inflicted.

Q. Is a *furnace* a frequent figure in the Scriptures, to represent great temporal calamities and punishments?

A. It is. “For they be thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the *furnace of iron*.”—(1 Kings viii. 51.)

Q. Was the furnace into which the *tares* or wicked persons were to be cast, in another state of existence, or in this world?

A. It was in this world.

Q. What evidence have you that the furnace was to be in this world?

A. We have the evidence of God’s word: “Saith the Lord, whose fire is in Zion, and his *furnace* in *Jerusalem*.”—(Isa. xxxi. 9.)

Q. Is there not another passage, which shows that Jerusalem was the furnace of God, in which he punished his wicked people?

A. There is. "Therefore, thus saith the Lord God; Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore I will gather you into the midst of *Jerusalem*. As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the *furnace*, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it : so will I gather you in mine anger, and in my fury and leave you there, and melt you. * * * * As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof."—(Ezek. xxii. 19—22.)

Q. Were the Jews, including the hypocritical followers of Christ, destroyed, as thus described, in Jerusalem, at the end of that world or age ?

A. They were. They were gathered into Jerusalem in vast numbers, where, after a long and awful siege, they were overwhelmed and destroyed by the Romans. This was the furnace into which the *tares* were cast—and here the fire of God's righteous judgments was poured out upon them, until they were destroyed.

Q. What fate were the righteous to experience at this period ?

A. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

Q. Who were the righteous ?

A. They were the *wheat*, which was to be gathered into garners—the faithful and devoted followers of Jesus.

Q. What is represented by their shining forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father ?

A. In this is represented, not only their salvation from the terrific calamities which overwhelmed the Jews, but also the superior privileges and advantages they enjoyed, and the peace with which they were blessed, for a long time after their enemies had been destroyed.

Q. What do you now understand to be the general meaning of this parable of the Wheat and Tares ?

A. We understand that the Saviour uttered it, to describe the separation which should take place between his true and false disciples, at the conclusion of the Jewish age, and the salvation and safety of the former, as well as the destruction of the latter.

Q. Is this construction of the parable supported by many able commentators?

A. It is.

Q. What says Bishop Pearce in relation to this parable?

A. "This [parable] is spoken, not of what shall happen at the end of the world, but of what was to happen at the end or destruction of the Jewish state.

* * * * Ecclesiastical history informs us, that by a divine admonition, the faithful Christians retired from Judea, before the ruin of it by the Romans, and were preserved."

Q. What is the language of Dr. Clarke?

A. "Some learned men are of opinion that the whole of this parable refers to the Jewish state; and that the words which are commonly translated *the end of the world*, should be rendered *the end of the age*, viz., the end of the Jewish polity. That the words have this meaning in other places, *there can be no doubt*; and this may be their primary meaning here."

[NOTE.—The parable of the Net, which is found in the same chapter with the parable of the Wheat and Tares, is so similar to the latter, in its phraseology and application, that it has not been deemed necessary to devote a separate lesson to its consideration. The teacher can ask such questions in regard to it, as may be thought proper, and the scholar will find abundant materials for answers, in the lesson just completed.

LESSON XIII.

Parable of the Marriage Feast.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise. And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."—(Matt. xxii. 2—13.)

Q. On what occasion was this parable uttered by Christ?

A. It was while he was partaking of a dinner with one of the chief Pharisees, on the Sabbath day.—(See Luke xiv. 1.)

Q. Were the Jews in the habit of making their best dinners on the Sabbath, for the purpose of honoring the day?

A. They were.

Q. What course did Jesus usually pursue in teaching?

A. In uttering his instructions, he commonly drew his illustrations from the circumstances around him.

Q. While thus partaking of a feast, surrounded by the guests which his host had invited, was it quite natural that he should refer to a feast, in illustration of his gospel and its effects?

Q. What is the opinion of commentators in regard to the commencement of this parable?

A. It is their opinion, that although the parable says the king made a *marriage* for his son, yet in the original language it evidently means a *marriage feast*, as the subsequent portion of the parable shows.

Q. Were the Jews and other Eastern nations in the habit of making great and sumptuous feasts at marriages?

A. They were.

Q. Were they in the habit of inviting large numbers to these feasts?

A. They were. The greater the number of guests, the more honorable it was considered in the giver of the festival.

Q. What general application should we give to this parable?

A. We should understand it as referring to the casting away of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles to the privileges and enjoyments of the gospel.

Q. Who is represented by the king?

A. Our heavenly Father.

Q. Who by the Son, for whom the marriage was prepared?

A. Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Q. What does the marriage feast represent?

A. It represents the gospel.

Q. Was the coming of the gospel foretold by the prophets under the figure of a great feast?

A. It was. Isaiah describes the gospel as a "feast

of fat things," made "unto all people," in the mountain of the Lord.—(See Isa. xxv. 6.)

Q. After the feast was prepared, what did the king do?

A. He sent forth his servants to invite guests to attend.

Q. What did those do who were first bidden?

A. They refused to attend.

Q. How did the king then proceed?

A. He again sent other servants to them, urging them to come, and describing to them the rich and ample provisions prepared for the feast.

Q. Did the guests then come?

A. They did not; but some made light of the invitation, and others abused and killed the servants of the king.

Q. What did the king do to those who thus slighted his invitations and slew his servants?

A. "He sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city."

Q. Who are we to understand as represented by the servants the king sent forth to invite the guests to the marriage feast?

A. The disciples of the Lord Jesus.

Q. Who are represented by those first bidden to the marriage?

A. The Jewish nation.

Q. What should we understand by their refusing the invitation, and slaying the servants of the king?

A. We should understand this as representing the rejection of the gospel of Christ, by the Jews, and their putting to death the disciples and apostles of the Redeemer.

Q. Did the Jews actually reject the gospel, and put to death its preachers?

A. They did. It is supposed that not only John the Baptist, but all the twelve disciples of Jesus,

with the exception of John, were put to death, besides great numbers of the early preachers and believers.

Q. What is represented by the king's sending forth his armies and destroying the murderers and burning up their city?

A. In this language the Saviour foretold the destruction of the Jewish nation and city, by the Roman armies.

Q. Did these calamities actually overwhelm the Jews, a few years after Jesus spoke this parable?

A. They did.

Q. What is the language of Dr. Clarke on this subject?

A. "By sending forth his troops, is meant the commission given to the Romans against Judea, and burning up their city, and the total destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, the son of Vespasian, which happened about forty-one years after."

Q. After the king found that the guests first invited would not attend, how did he then proceed?

A. He again sent forth his servants, and bid them invite all they could find in the streets and highways, both good and bad, to come in and partake of the feast; and thus the wedding was furnished with guests.

Q. What custom, in relation to this point, prevailed among the Jews?

A. When a rich man gave a feast, it was the custom to send and invite in all destitute travellers.

Q. To what should we understand this part of the parable as referring?

A. We should understand it as referring to the calling of the Gentiles, to become the recipients of the blessings of the gospel.

Q. How did the Jews estimate the Gentiles?

A. They viewed them as miserable wretches, as beggars and dogs.

Q. Could those Jews to whom Christ addressed

the parable, fail to understand that he alluded to the Gentiles; under those who were invited to the feast from the highways and hedges?

A. They could not.

Q. Was the gospel first preached to the Jews?

A. It was. Jesus sent forth the twelve, "and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles. * * * * But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."—(Matt. x. 5, 6.)

Q. But the Jews having rejected the gospel thus offered to them, to whom was it then proclaimed?

A. It was then preached to the Gentile world.

Q. What was the language of Paul and Barnabas to the Jews on this point?

A. "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: [the Jews] but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, [the truths of the gospel] lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou [Christ] shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."—(Acts xiii. 46, 47.)

Q. Did the Gentiles receive the gospel?

A. They did. "And the apostles and brethren that were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God."—(Acts xi. 1.)

Q. When the king came in to see the guests, what did he discover?

A. "He saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment."

Q. What was required, in those days, of the guests at weddings?

A. It was required that they should all be dressed in wedding garments, or garments suitable to the occasion.

Q. Of what description were these wedding garments?

A. They were usually long white robes.

Q. What was done for those who were not able to furnish themselves with wedding garments?

A. They were supplied by their host. Bishop Porteus says, that "if he who gave the entertainment was of very high rank, and great opulence, he sometimes provided marriage robes for the whole assembly."

Q. What was thought of a guest who failed to appear in one of these garments?

A. He was considered as offering insult to the giver of the feast and to the guests, and was deemed worthy of punishment.

Q. What did the king command his servants to do with the man who had not on a wedding garment?

A. "Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Q. How does Dr. Clarke explain the phrase "outer darkness?"

A. "The Jewish marriages were performed in the night season, and the hall where the feast was made, was superbly illuminated; the *outer darkness* means, therefore, the darkness on the outside of this festal hall; rendered still more gloomy to the person who was suddenly thrust out into it from such a profusion of light."

Q. What does the same writer say of the phrase "weeping and gnashing of teeth?"

A. "And because they who were shut out, were not only exposed to *shame*, but also to *hunger* and *cold*, therefore it is added, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Q. Who were represented in the parable by the man without a wedding garment?

A. We should understand him as a representative of the same class that were referred to under the figure of "*the tares*," in the parable of the wheat and tares, viz., those of the Jews who professed to have been converted to Christianity, but who proved corrupt at heart, and abandoned the cause of the Redeemer.

Q. Were there some of this description in the days of Christ?

A. There were. Although the great mass of the Jews rejected the gospel, yet a portion of them were converted to Christ; but some of these, it seems, proved defective, for St. John informs us that at a certain time, "many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him."—(John vi. 66.)

Q. What should we understand by the binding hand and foot of the man who had not on the wedding garment?

A. This represents the return of those pretended converts to their old Jewish superstitions and traditions, by which they were blinded and bound fast in bigotry and error.

Q. Is a man whose mind is deeply warped by superstition and bigotry, truly represented by one whose limbs are bound with chains and shackles?

Q. What meaning should we draw from the casting of this guest into outer darkness, where there was weeping and gnashing of teeth?

A. We should view this language as referring to the destruction in which these backsliding Christians became involved, in common with the whole Jewish nation.

Q. Should we understand the doom which came upon those who were first invited to the marriage, but refused to attend, and him who was cast out, because he had not on a wedding garment, to be the same?

A. We should. Although in the narration of the

parable, the destruction of the former is related before mention is made of the invitation to those in the highways, yet we should not suppose the king sent out his armies to destroy his enemies, on the same evening their refusal was given.

Q. How should we understand this point?

A. In relating the parable, Jesus digressed briefly from a direct narration, to anticipate and state what finally befel those who refused the invitation of the king, and then returned and proceeded with the remainder of the parable.

Q. Did those Jews who from the first, rejected Christ, and those who professed to be converted, but finally fell back to Judaism, both become involved in the same overwhelming destruction?

A. They did. Both were alike destroyed when God sent the Roman armies to overthrow that wicked people.

Q. Are the Jews to remain forever cast away?

A. They are not.

Q. What evidence is there that they will all finally be restored?

A. The evidence of St. Paul—"I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits,) that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved."—(Rom. xi. 25, 26.)

Q. What does the Apostle say, in the same chapter, in regard to the object of the Creator, in allowing the Jews at one time to believe and the Gentiles to disbelieve, and then reversing their condition?

A. "For as ye [Gentiles] in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have those [the Jews] also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. *For God hath concluded them all*

in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.”—
(Rom. xi. 30, 31, 32.)

LESSON XIV.

Parable of the Good Samaritan.

“A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him; and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow, when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, take care of him: and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, he that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, go, and do thou likewise.”—(Luke x. 30—37.)

Q. To whom did Jesus originally address this parable?

A. To a Jewish lawyer.

Q. What was a lawyer at that time?

A. He was a religious teacher, or one who expounded the Levitical law.

Q. What inquiry did the lawyer make of Christ, which gave rise to the parable?

A. “Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

Q. What do you understand by “eternal life?”

A. (See Lesson VI., p. 29.)

Q. What answer did the Redeemer return?

A. He inquired of the lawyer, what was written in the law on this subject.

Q. What was the lawyer's reply?

A. "And he answering, said, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself."

Q. Did Jesus commend this answer?

A. He did. "And he said unto him, thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live."

Q. What did Christ say, on another occasion, of the importance of these two commandments to love God and our neighbor?

A. "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."—(Matt. xxii. 40.)

Q. What should we understand by this?

A. That those who sincerely and truly keep these two commandments, will necessarily fulfil all the requirements of God.

Q. What inquiry did the lawyer then make?

A. "But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, and who is my neighbor?"

Q. What should we understand by the lawyer's endeavouring to justify himself in asking this question?

A. The lawyer, supposing that none could be considered his neighbors, but his own countrymen, the Jews, and feeling that he had always loved *them*, thought he had already fulfilled these commandments to the letter; he, therefore, boastingly made the inquiry, supposing Christ would be compelled to reply in such a manner as to justify him in assuming to have fulfilled all the law.

Q. How did the Saviour answer him?

A. He answered by relating the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Q. What, then, was the general object of this parable?

A. It was to instruct the lawyer who was his neighbor.

Q. How did he commence the parable?

A. "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho."

Q. In what direction is Jericho from Jerusalem, and how far distant?

A. It is in a north-east direction, and distant about twenty miles.

Q. What happened to the traveller on his way to Jericho?

A. He "fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead."

Q. What description of road was it from Jerusalem to Jericho?

A. It was a wild, lonely, mountainous pass, with few, if any, inhabitants dwelling along its course.

Q. What dangers beset those who travelled this road?

A. They were in danger of falling into the hands of thieves and robbers. The face of the country was such as to afford shelter and protection to these desperadoes.

Q. Is this road still considered a dangerous one?

A. It is. Buckingham, a late English traveller, says, "the whole of this road, from Jerusalem to the Jordan, is held to be the most dangerous about Palestine."

Q. Who passed along, while the poor Jew lay bruised and bleeding on the earth?

A. "And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side."

Q. What do you say of this conduct of the priest and Levite?

A. They exhibited great selfishness and hardness of heart, in passing by their wounded fellow-countryman, without affording the least assistance.

Q. Why was their conduct peculiarly disgraceful?

A. Because they both belonged to the order of the priesthood, and made great pretensions to religion and piety.

Q. Who next came where the wounded Jew lay?

A. "But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was."

Q. Who were the Samaritans?

A. They were a people who inhabited Samaria, a country adjoining Judea.

Q. Who were the former inhabitants of that country?

A. Samaria was formerly the country of ten of the tribes of Israel; but after these tribes were carried into captivity by the king of Assyria, 740 years before Christ, the country was peopled by colonies sent from the east, for that purpose, by the Assyrian monarch.

Q. Did these Samaritans adopt a religion somewhat similar to the Jewish?

A. They did.

Q. Where was their temple?

A. At Mount Gerizim.

Q. Were the Jews and Samaritans on good terms with each other?

A. They were not. The Jews despised the Samaritans; and both cherished feelings of the utmost enmity and hatred towards each other.

Q. Can you quote a passage where this national enmity is alluded to?

A. When the Redeemer met the Samaritan wo-

man at Jacob's well, and requested her to give him water to drink, she replied—"How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? (for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.)"—(John iv. 9.)

Q. When the Samaritan in proceeding on his journey, saw the wounded Jew, his enemy, is it not natural to suppose that he would also have passed by without affording relief?

A. It is; especially after the priest and the Levite, the wounded man's own countrymen, had failed to succor him.

Q. Did the Samaritan proceed in this manner?

Q. What did he do when he saw the wounded Jew?

A. "He had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine."

Q. Were oil and wine used formerly for the cure of bruises and wounds?

A. They were; and travellers usually carried these articles with them, on their journeys.

Q. What else did he do for the poor Jew?

A. "He set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him."

Q. What did he do the next morning?

A. "On the morrow, when he departed, he took out *two pence*, [two denarii,] and gave them to the host."

Q. How much is *two denarii*?

A. It is about thirty cents, in our currency.

Q. How much more valuable was money then than now?

A. It is supposed to have been about ten times more valuable then than at the present day; so that the Samaritan left as good as three dollars for the benefit of his wounded enemy.

Q. What did he say to the host before he departed?

A. "Take care of him : and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee."

Q. What disposition did the Samaritan exhibit in these transactions ?

A. He manifested a disposition of the most benevolent and compassionate description, and showed himself well entitled to the name of the *good Samaritan*.

Q. What did Jesus say to the lawyer, at the conclusion of the parable ?

A. "Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among thieves ?"

Q. What was the lawyer's reply ?

A. "He said, He that showed mercy on him."

Q. In what predicament did this answer place him ?

A. It made him virtually acknowledge that in loving his brethren, the Jews, *only*, he violated that command which directed him to love his neighbor as himself—and that the whole Jewish nation violated the same command, in hating the Samaritans, their neighbors.

Q. What did Christ say to the lawyer, before leaving him ?

A. "Then said Jesus unto him, Go and do thou likewise."

Q. Was this most salutary advice ?

Q. What general lesson do we learn from this parable ?

A. We learn that every man, throughout the world, who is poor, and needy, and in distress, is *our neighbor*.

Q. How are we bound to feel and act towards all such ?

A. We are bound to *love them as ourselves*, and to render them all the relief and assistance in our power.

Q. Whatever a man's professions may be, can he

be a true Christian who fails in thus feeling and acting?

Q. Is there any exception to this moral obligation?

A. There is not. Whoever the helpless and suffering may be—whatever may be their character, circumstances, or complexion—we are bound by the very spirit of Christ's precept and example, to reach to them a helping hand.

Q. What kind of example was set us by the good Samaritan?

A. An example of the most valuable description.

Q. Should it be our effort to imitate it?

A. It should. We should strive to obey the injunction of the Redeemer, "Go, and do thou likewise."

Q. In seeing a fellow-being in distress, should we first question him as to the *character* he has borne, and give relief only when the character has been good?

A. We should not. Where there is *actual* wretchedness, we should *always give relief*, however that wretchedness may have been brought about.

Q. How should we then proceed?

A. After *giving relief*, we should then inquire into the cause of the suffering, and impart such admonition, advice, or consolation, as the case may seem to require.

Q. What should we be careful to avoid?

A. We should be exceedingly careful to avoid seeking any excuse to justify ourselves in turning away from *real* wretchedness, without giving such relief as may be in our power.

Q. Is there *any* justification for such a course?

A. *There is not.*

LESSON XV.

Parable of the Covetous Man.

'The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully : and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits ? And he said, This will I do : I will pull down my barns, and build greater ; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years : take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee : then whose shall these things be which thou hast provided ?"—Luke xii. 16—20.

Q. What gave rise to this parable ?

A. It was occasioned by a certain man, who came to Christ and requested him to make his brother divide with him the inheritance left by their father.

Q. Did Jesus comply with this request ?

A. He did not ; he declined interfering in the business. But he took the opportunity to warn his hearers against the sin of covetousness.

Q. What was his language ?

A. "Take heed, and beware of covetousness : for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

Q. What should we understand by the latter part of the above sentence ?

A. That our existence and happiness in this world, do not depend upon the abundance of our riches.

Q. Was it to illustrate this truth, that the parable was uttered ?

A. It was.

Q. How did he commence the parable ?

A. "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully."

Q. Have we any reason to believe this man obtained his riches dishonestly?

A. We have not; it may be supposed he gained his wealth by equitable business transactions.

Q. Did his sin, then, consist in being rich?

A. It neither consisted in being rich, nor in his grounds bringing forth plentifully.

Q. Is it wrong to obtain riches by an honest occupation?

A. It is not.

Q. Where lies the greater responsibility in those who thus secure wealth?

A. Their responsibility lies in the use they make of their property.

Q. In what dilemma was the rich man, on account of his ground bringing forth so plentifully?

A. "And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?"

Q. Are people generally troubled in this manner?

A. They are not. Most of mankind find it more difficult to *obtain* the fruits of the earth, than to *store* them.

Q. What did the rich man finally conclude to do?

A. "And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods."

Q. Is it not singular that this man, while troubled to find room to store his fruits and goods, did not think to bestow some portion of them upon the poor?

Q. Is this man an exception, in this respect, to the wealthy in general?

Q. How is it with the rich on this subject?

A. The majority of them are usually more intent on increasing their stores, and enlarging their means for securing a still greater amount of wealth, than on devoting it to good and useful purposes.

Q. To what purpose did the rich man in this parable determine to devote his property?

A. "And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry."

Q. What do you say of this language?

A. It is the language of a sordid, selfish and ignorant man.

Q. What does it indicate of his conception of happiness?

A. It indicates that he considered happiness to consist in eating, drinking, and the gratifying of the bodily appetites.

Q. What do you think of this kind of enjoyment?

A. It is of the lowest description; and when freely indulged, generally leads to those excesses which engender disease and wretchedness.

Q. What are the most elevated enjoyments of which our natures are susceptible, and after which we should constantly seek?

A. The enjoyments which flow from the exercise of our religious, moral, and intellectual faculties.

Q. Do these impart a pleasure that never cloy or injures us?

A. They do. And this pleasure is of a purifying and elevating description.

Q. Has wealth any greater power than a moderate competency, to enable the bodily appetites to grant all the true enjoyments they are capable of imparting?

A. It has not.

Q. What real advantage have the wealthy over those of small means?

A. They have but one real advantage, viz., the power of gratifying a benevolent disposition, when an object of distress requests relief, and of aiding in the promotion of works for the benefit of mankind.

Q. Should we desire riches for any other than such uses?

A. We should not. These are the only right and commendable purposes to which wealth can be devoted.

Q. What influence has the acquisition of riches upon the disposition?

A. It usually has a tendency to enlarge the selfish propensities, harden the heart, and freeze up the nobler and finer susceptibilities of the soul.

Q. Are men frequently much more grasping and miserly after having acquired stores of riches, than when they had but little or no property?

A. They are.

Q. Are they sensible of this change?

A. They usually are not; but believe themselves to be quite as liberal as they ever were.

Q. Should this hardening process be strongly guarded against when prosperity attends us?

Q. What was the prayer of ancient Agur?

A. "Give me neither poverty nor riches."

Q. Is there prudence and wisdom in this prayer?

A. There is. A condition, equally removed from poverty and riches, is the most safe to be occupied in life—is one beset by the fewest dangers, and calculated to yield the greatest amount of earthly happiness.

Q. What is God represented as saying to the rich man in this parable?

A. "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"

Q. What is this language designed to show?

A. It is designed to show the worthless nature of earthly wealth, and the folly of placing dependence upon it for happiness—that however much its possessors may promise themselves sensual pleasures through its means, they are exposed to deep disappointments—and that it cannot save them from the approach of death.

Q. What truth does the concluding sentence of the parable convey?

A. That the property of the wealthy, at their death, must pass into the possession of others.

Q. What frequently becomes of the property of the rich, after their decease?

A. The wealth which they toil all their life to acquire, and which they hoard with miserly care, until death relaxes their grasp, is frequently squandered by their heirs, in profuse luxury and debauchery, in a few brief years.

Q. What is the result of their labor in these cases?

A. They labor to acquire that which but leads their heirs to early dissipation and ruin.

Q. What often becomes of property which the wealthy leave in legacies?

A. It is often wasted by mismanagement, and devoted to purposes which the donors little anticipated.

Q. What is the better way of proceeding?

A. It is better to make our donations while living, that we may see they are devoted to the purposes we designed.

Q. What should we understand by the declaration, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee?"

A. That he should that night die.

Q. Can this declaration be made to mean anything more?

A. It cannot.

Q. From what is the word *soul* translated in this parable?

A. From the Greek word *psuche*.

Q. What is the meaning of this word?

A. It has various significations. Sometimes it means the breath, the life—sometimes the whole man—and occasionally it signifies the soul.

Q. What is its signification in this parable?

A. It evidently means the life.

Q. Does this word, in the Scriptures, frequently mean the *soul*, as we generally use the latter term?

A. It does not. In most cases it means the *life*.

Q. Is there any other Greek word translated *soul*, in the New Testament?

A. There is. The word *pneuma* is thus translated.

Q. What should we understand by this word, when rendered *soul*?

A. We should understand the *spirit*—that part of man which is destined to survive the dissolution of the body, and which is usually denominated the *soul*.

Q. Can you quote a passage where *soul* means the whole man?

A. "Let every soul [*psuche*] be subject unto the higher powers."—(Rom. xiii. 1.)

Q. Can you repeat a passage where the above named Greek words are used in connection?

A. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul [*psuche*] and spirit," [*pneumatōs*].—(Heb. iv. 12.)

Q. Can you quote another passage where these words occur?

A. "I pray God your whole spirit, [*pneuma*—soul,] and soul, [*psuche*—life,] and body, [*soma*,] be preserved blameless," &c.—(1 Thess. v. 23.)

Q. Have our translators sometimes improperly rendered *psuche*, soul, in the same passage where they have also rendered it *life*?

A. They have. "Whosoever will save his life, [*psuche*,] shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life [*psuche*] for my sake, shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? [*psuche*,] or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" [*psuche*].—(Matt. xvi. 25, 26.)

Q. Is this a singular translation ?

A. It is most singular. It is as requisite that *psuche* should be rendered *life*, in the last part of the passage as the first ; for it means simply *the life*, in each instance.

LESSON XVI.

Parable of the Master of the House.

“ Strive to enter in at the strait gate : for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us ; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are : then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are ; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.”—(Luke xiii. 24—29.)

Q. In reply to what question, did Jesus speak this parable ?

A. In reply to a question put him by a certain Jew —“ Lord, are there few that be saved ?”

Q. Is there any evidence, or any reason to believe, that this question related to another world ?

A. There is not.

Q. Are not *saved* and *salvation*, frequently applied in the Scriptures, to an escape from danger and wretchedness, in this life ?

A. They are.

Q. Can you give an instance of this description ?

A. "And spared not the old world, but saved Noah, the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness."—(2 Pet. ii. 5.) "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved."—(Matt. xxiv. 22.)

Q. From what were those persons saved, who are referred to in the above passages?

A. The former was saved from the flood, and the latter was a salvation from the destruction of the Jews.

Q. What did Peter exhort his hearers to save themselves from?

A. "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation."—(Acts ii. 40.)

Q. What does Dr. Hammond say of the meaning of the inquiry, "Are there few that be saved?"

A. "And then the clear meaning of this uncertain man's question, will be this—Whether this doctrine or faith of Christ, so contrary to the humor and passions of the world, should be able to propagate itself, and prove so successful as to be received by many, or whether it should be contained and enclosed within a narrow pale, that so he might either resist Christ with the many, or have the honor of being one of the few singular persons that received him."

Q. What does Kenrick say of the salvation under consideration?

A. He says, "believing in Christ, is with propriety called *being saved*, because it was attended with temporal deliverance; whereas unbelief produced inevitable destruction, in the calamities which awaited the Jewish nation."

Q. How did the Redeemer proceed to reply to the question propounded to him?

A. He answered by uttering the parable, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate."

Q. Into what were they to strive to enter through the strait gate?

A. Into the gospel kingdom, or the enjoyment of the religion of Jesus Christ.

Q. What was "the strait gate?"

A. It was that commandment of Christ, which embodied the whole spirit of his moral teachings—"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so unto them."—(See Lesson VIII., p. 39.)

Q. What is the language of Kenrick, on the commencement of the parable?

A. "Christ, in his answer to the question, exhorts the person who made it, and others who might hear it, to enter the strait gate, that is, to embrace his religion, which was at that time attended with many difficulties, and which might fitly be compared to entering a strait or narrow passage."

Q. What does the Saviour add to this exhortation?

A. "For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

Q. What would they seek to enter in?

A. The gospel kingdom, or the privileges and enjoyments of the religion of Christ.

Q. Why would they not be able to enter in?

A. The reason assigned by Jesus in the parable, is, that the door of the gospel will be closed—"When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door."

Q. Who is meant by the Master of the house?

A. Jesus Christ, who is the Master or Ruler in his mediatorial kingdom.

Q. Who were those against whom the door would be shut?

A. They were the Jews.

Q. What says Dr. Whitby?

A. He says, "They who seek to enter and shall

not be able, because the Master has shut to his door, are those Jews who sought for righteousness by the works of the law, and not by faith, and therefore found it not."

Q. What do you understand by the shutting to of the door of the gospel?

A. This undoubtedly represents the exclusion of the Jews from the benefits of the gospel. As a people, they were not to be permitted, at present, to participate in the blessings conferred on the world by the religion of the Saviour.

Q. Why were they to be thus rejected, and the door closed against them?

A. It was because of the blindness of their eyes, and the hardness of their hearts. They did not perceive the evidence of the divine authenticity of the Messiah's mission, nor feel the loveliness and power of his sublime system of religion and morals.

Q. Was this blindness sent upon them by God, as a punishment for their crimes?

A. It was. St. Paul says, "God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear."—(Rom. xi. 8.)

Q. What are the words of Christ, on this subject?

A. "In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive; for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed."—(Matt. xiii. 14, 15.)

Q. The Jews being thus blinded, and the door of the gospel closed against them, what does the Saviour represent them as saying in the parable?

A. "And ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are. Then shall ye begin to say, We

have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets."

Q. What does this language represent?

A. It represents the condition of the Jews after their rejection of the Redeemer. When the door of the gospel had been closed against them, in consequence of their blindness and unbelief—when they had been cast into "the outer darkness," and became involved in the woes and horrors, which Christ denounced on that wicked generation—then they would begin to think of the Redeemer they had persecuted and put to death—then they would call to mind his reproofs, his warnings, his exhortations for them to flee the wrath about to come—and would heartily regret, in dust and ashes, that they had turned a deaf ear to his gentle voice of entreaty.

Q. Would this sorrow save them from the punishment due their iniquities?

A. It would not. "He shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are: depart from me all ye workers of iniquity."

Q. Does sorrow for crime save the criminal from deserved punishment?

A. It does not; and it availed not the Jews. In vain they cried, "Lord, Lord, open unto us!" The time had passed when they could have been benefited by the gospel—they were given over to blindness and unbelief—the Saviour knew them not as his followers—they had stumbled at the promises of God, and must fall. The sentence is passed against them—"Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity."

Q. Did the Jews depart from Christ and his religion?

A. They did; and became involved in punishments of the most terrific description, even before that generation passed away, as Jesus had forewarned them.

Q. How did Christ describe this punishment, in the parable?

A. "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out."

Q. Should we give the same meaning to the phrase "kingdom of God," that we have to "kingdom of heaven," in the parables already considered?

A. We should. It means, in this, as in many other instances, the gospel kingdom and reign of Jesus Christ.

LESSON XVII.

Parable of the Master of the House—Continued.

Q. Who would the Jews see in this spiritual kingdom of Christ?

A. They would see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets.

Q. In what light should we view this declaration?

A. To the patriarchs were the first promises made of the coming of the Messiah, to be the Saviour of the world, and these promises they rejoiced in believing—to the prophets was given the vision whereby they foretold the advent of the same Redeemer, who was to become a light to the Gentile world, and the glory of the people of Israel.

Q. May it properly be said that these patriarchs and prophets are in "the kingdom of God?"

A. It may. They believed the Son of God would come in due time—they believed that out of Zion would come the Deliverer—that in him all the nations, kindreds and families of the earth should be blessed—yea, that he should at last "turn away ungodliness from Jacob." In believing these great truths, they

believed the gospel, or that which became the gospel of Jesus Christ—the “glad tidings of great joy unto all people.” Hence it may very truly be said, they are in the kingdom of God—the gospel kingdom of Christ.

Q. Does St. Paul declare that the gospel was preached unto Abraham?

A. He does. “The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.”—(Gal. iii. 8.)

Q. What does the apostle here say was the *gospel*, which God preached to Abraham?

A. It was this important declaration—“In thee shall all nations be blessed.”

Q. How does St. Paul explain this promise to Abraham?

A. “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.”—(Gal. iii. 16.)

Q. If God preached the *gospel* unto Abraham, when he declared that in his seed (Christ) all the nations of the earth should be blessed, do they preach the *gospel*, who declare that countless nations of the earth shall never be blessed in Christ?

Q. What was the meaning of the Saviour, when he declared in the parable, that the Jews would “see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God,” and they themselves thrust out?

A. The Jews would have discernment sufficient to see, that the promises made to the patriarchs, and all the predictions of their prophets, were in perfect unison with the gospel of Jesus Christ—while they, believing these promises and predictions, still rejected the gospel in which they were fulfilled, and by this rejection they were thrust out.

Q. What do you understand by the weeping and gnashing of teeth, which shall come upon the Jews when they see these things?

A. We understand this to be a figure representing the temporal calamities and woes which should overtake them, in consequence of their rejection of Christ's gospel.

Q. Where the Jews thrust out?

A. They were. They refused to receive Christ and his religion, and were thrust into "outer darkness."

Q. Have they continued in this condition to the present time?

A. They have. As a people, they have refused to receive the gospel, to this hour, and are thus still thrust out from Christ's kingdom.

Q. What do you say of their punishment?

A. It has been sore indeed. They have been a common object of persecution in all nations, and through all ages, from the days of Christ to the present moment.

Q. Is this falling and casting away of the Jews to be everlasting?

A. It is not.

Q. What was the declaration of St. Paul on this subject?

A. "Have they [the Jews] stumbled, that they should fall, [everlastingly?] God forbid!"

Q. What reason does the Apostle assign in the same passage, for their fall being permitted by God?

A. "But rather through their fall, salvation is come unto the Gentiles."—(Rom. xi. 11.)

Q. Are the Jews yet to be restored and reconciled?

A. They are. "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?"—(Rom. xi. 15.)

Q. What does this declaration teach?

A. That God, in the exercise of his infinite wisdom, will make the casting away of the Jews one of the means through which he will reconcile the whole world unto himself, and that, at length, the Jews shall themselves be received into the kingdom of Christ, as life springing up from the dead.

Q. In the meantime, who does Christ say in the parable, are to occupy the gospel kingdom, while the Jews are thrust out?

A. The Gentile world. "And they [the Gentiles,] shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God."

Q. What do you understand by "sitting down in the kingdom of God?"

A. Entering in to the belief and enjoyments of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Q. What is the language of Dr. Whitby, on this point?

A. "To sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, doth not signify to enjoy everlasting happiness in heaven with them, but to become the sons of Abraham through faith."

Q. Is the kingdom of Christ finally to become so extensive, as to include all people?

A. It is. "And there was given him [the Son of man] dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him."—(Daniel vii. 14.)

Q. When "all people" shall serve or follow Christ, will they not be holy and happy?

Q. How long is Jesus to reign in his kingdom?

A. "He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet."—(1 Cor. xv. 25.)

Q. What is the meaning of putting enemies under his feet?

A. This is a figure representing the subduing and destroying of enemies.

Q. What are the enemies which Christ must thus destroy during his reign?

A. They are those things which are at enmity, or in opposition, to his gospel—all the pride, the selfishness, the sin, which is in the hearts of men, and which leads them to turn away from the gentle teachings of the Redeemer—everything that can deter mankind from submitting to the peaceful reign of King Immanuel.

Q. Which of all the enemies of Christ and of man, is to be destroyed last?

A. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed, is death."—(1 Cor. xv. 26.)

Q. Is there any evidence that not only death, but even him that had the power of death, shall be destroyed by Jesus?

A. There is. "Forasmuch then as the children [mankind] are partakers of flesh and blood, he [Christ] also himself likewise took part, of the same; that through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."—(Heb. ii. 14.)

Q. What will Christ do, after having destroyed death, the last enemy?

A. Having completed the work he came to do—having reconciled all men to God—having saved the world from sin and death—then his reign will come to an end. He will deliver up the mediatorial kingdom to God, the Father, and God will "be all in all?"—(See 1 Cor. xv. 24—28.)

Q. What do you understand by God becoming "all in all?"

A. His spirit will pervade, and fill, and sanctify, and perfect, the souls of all intelligent beings.

Q. When God becomes thus, "all in all," can there be any creature formed by him, who will be unholy and unhappy?

Q. What do you say of a faith which embraces these great truths?

A. It is the most elevating, consoling, and joy-inspiring belief that the Christian heart can in this life obtain.

LESSON XVIII.

Parable of the Lost Sheep.

"What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost."—(Luke xv. 4—6.)

Q. From what did the Redeemer draw this parable?

A. From the pastoral occupations of the Jews.

Q. Did they possess great numbers of sheep?

A. They did.

Q. How were their sheep taken care of?

A. They were divided into separate flocks, and placed under the care of shepherds.

Q. What was the duty of a shepherd?

A. It was his duty to guard the flock entrusted to his charge—to protect it from thieves and ravenous beasts—and to lead it into places where the safest and richest pasturage could be found.

Q. Were the shepherds often compelled to lead their flocks to a great distance, and into unfrequented places, to find good pasture?

A. They were.

Q. What do you say of the nature of sheep?

A. They are weak and defenceless animals, and, in a domestic state, are extremely dependent upon their keepers for protection.

Q. Are they liable to stray?

A. When kept as anciently, roaming at large, in the vast solitudes of Syria, under the care of a single man and his dog, they were constantly liable to stray from the flock and become lost.

Q. What is the shepherd's duty in this case?

A. It is his duty to seek for the lost sheep, and bring it back to the fold.

Q. On what occasion did Jesus utter the parable of the Lost Sheep?

A. It was when addressing a large concourse of "publicans and sinners," among whom were also some Pharisees and scribes.

Q. Who were the "publicans and sinners?"

A. *Publicans* were Roman tax-gatherers, appointed to collect the tribute which the Jews were compelled to pay to Rome. *Sinners* was a general title given to the Gentiles, or heathen—to all, indeed, who were not Jews.

Q. In what estimation were the "publicans and sinners" held by the Jews?

A. They scorned and despised them, and cherished for them a most malignant hatred and enmity.

Q. While Christ was addressing the publicans and sinners, who uttered a complaint against him?

A. "And the pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, this man receiveth sinners and eateth with them."

Q. Why did they murmur?

A. Because it was considered not only disgraceful but wicked, for a Jew to mingle, or have any intercourse, with publicans and sinners.

Q. Did Jesus consent to the propriety of this national prejudice of the Jews?

A. He did not; but uttered the parable now under

consideration, to correct this prejudice, and to justify himself in associating with publicans and sinners, and eating with them.

Q. How did the Saviour commence the parable?

A. "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost until he find it?"

Q. Does he not put them a very plain question here?

Q. Would not a shepherd, when one of his flock had become lost, leave the rest, and seek that which had strayed?

Q. Does the word *wilderness*, in the parable, represent, as with us, a dense forest?

A. It does not. It signifies simply, a retired or lonely place. There are in Syria or Judea, no extensive woods, like the American forests.

Q. Who does the Saviour represent in the parable, by the owner or shepherd of the sheep?

A. He represents himself.

Q. Is Jesus frequently represented in the New Testament, as a Shepherd?

A. He is. In one instance he is called the "great Shepherd of the sheep,"—in another, "the chief Shepherd,"—and in another, "the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."

Q. If Jesus is the Shepherd, who are his sheep?

A. On a certain occasion the Redeemer exclaimed, "the good Shepherd *giveth his life* for the sheep."—(John. x. 11.) He is the Shepherd, therefore, of all for whom *he gave his life*.

Q. For whom did he give his life?

A. St. Paul answers this question,—“that he by the grace of God, should *taste death for every man*.”—(Heb. ii. 9.) “Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”—(1 Timothy 2—6.) “He died for all.”—(2 Cor. v. 15.)

Q. What do we learn from these passages?

A. We learn that as Christ, the Good Shepherd, gave his life for all mankind, all are his sheep.

Q. What is the declaration of Dr. Clarke on this point?

A. He says, "the whole flock of mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, belongs unto this divine Shepherd."

Q. Who is represented by the sheep which wandered away and became *lost*?

A. This represents the sinner. Every sinner is here depicted by Jesus, as a *lost sheep*.

Q. Are sinners frequently represented, in the Scriptures, under the figure of lost sheep?

A. They are. "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way."—(Isa. liii. 6.) David, in confessing his sins, exclaims,—*"I have gone astray like a lost sheep: seek thy servant."*—(Psalm cxix. 176.)

Q. Did Christ and his Apostles represent sinners under the same figure?

A. They did. In reference to the sinful Jews, Christ said to his disciples,—*"But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."*—(Matt. x. 6.) The Apostle Peter, in speaking of the former sinfulness of those to whom he directed his epistle, said,—*"ye were as sheep going astray."*—(1 Pet. ii. 25.)

Q. After the sheep had strayed away and become lost, how does the parable represent the owner or shepherd, as proceeding?

A. It is said he will *"go after that which is lost, until he find it."*

Q. Can he be considered a good and faithful shepherd, who does not seek for his sheep when they are lost?

Q. How long will a faithful shepherd continue to search for his sheep?

A. "*Until he find it.*" He will never feel himself at liberty to relinquish the search—he will never consider his duty discharged and his work done—until the *lost sheep is found*.

Q. What does this part of the parable represent?

A. It represents that Jesus Christ, the good Shepherd, came to seek and find the lost sheep of his great flock—the sinful part of mankind.

Q. Does the Redeemer declare this important truth in plain language?

A. He does most emphatically: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."—(Luke xix. 10.)

Q. Who are lost?

A. All sinners are lost—they are lost sheep—they have strayed from the fold of God. And Jesus, the Shepherd, has come to find and to save them.

Q. How long will Christ continue to seek for the lost sheep—the sinful part of the world?

A. The parable authorizes us to believe he will continue to seek *until he finds them*.

Q. Is this the manner in which the shepherd is represented as seeking, in the parable?

LESSON XIX.

Parable of the Lost Sheep—Continued.

Q. If it is a proof of a faithful shepherd to search for his lost sheep until he find them, is it not equally a proof of a faithful shepherd of souls, to seek for sinners until he *finds* them?

Q. Is not a human soul of vastly more value than a sheep?

A. It is. Jesus inquires, "How much, then, is a man better than a sheep?"—(Matt. xii. 12.)

Q. What conclusion then may we draw?

A. We may conclude that if a shepherd considers his lost sheep of sufficient value to seek for them until he *finds* them, the "shepherd and bishop of souls" deems his lost sheep—the sinful children of humanity—of value enough to seek for them until he *finds* them all, and returns them to the sheepfold of God.

Q. Can we consistently look upon Jesus as a *faithful* shepherd, if we believe he will return from his search, leaving vast numbers of his strayed and lost sheep to perish?

Q. Is the shepherd represented as saying that if, after searching for a short period, he did not find the lost sheep, he should return without it, and suffer it to perish?

Q. Can it be supposed the Saviour of the world will conduct his search after the lost sheep of mankind, in this manner?

A. It cannot. The Scriptures do not assert nor intimate that Jesus will endeavor for a season to save sinners, and, if he does not succeed, will then abandon the undertaking in despair; but Christ himself declares that he came not only to seek, but to *save*, that which was lost!

Q. If there is a sinner of the human race whom Jesus does not save, will there not be a sheep which he has not found?

A. There will; and the work he came to do, would, in that case, never be accomplished.

Q. In what light would this place the Redeemer before the world?

A. In the light of an unfaithful shepherd, who returns without finding the lost sheep which he went to seek and bring back, and thus fails in the chief work it was his duty to do.

Q. Would it not be ungenerous and wicked, to believe that Christ will discharge the duties of shepherd in this unfaithful manner?

Q. What assurance have we that he will not be thus unfaithful, but will continue to search until he finds every lost sheep in his great flock?

A. One assurance is, that he is a *good* and *faithful* shepherd, and hence will seek until all his flock are found. Another assurance is given in the parable, where Christ represents the shepherd as *finding* his lost sheep, and bringing it back to the fold.

Q. What is the shepherd represented as doing after he found the sheep?

A. "And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing."

Q. Why did he lay the sheep on his shoulders?

A. It was undoubtedly because it was wearied and exhausted, and could not return of itself.

Q. Was it any reason, because the sheep had strayed, that the shepherd should not restore it to the flock?

A. It was not; but it was the very reason why he should bring it back.

Q. Is the fact that men are sinners, a valid excuse to justify "the shepherd and bishop of souls" in refusing to bring them back?

A. It is not. The only reason why they want a Saviour is because they *are* sinners; and the *want* which calls for a Saviour cannot consistently be urged as a reason why the sinner cannot be saved, nor why the Redeemer should not save him.

Q. Did the shepherd wait until the lost sheep returned of its own accord, before he placed it in safety in the fold?

A. He did not. He went out and sought for the lost *until he found it*, and then placed it upon his shoulders, and tenderly brought it back to a place of security.

Q. What truth did the Saviour intend to convey by this figure ?

A. He designed to teach us, not only that he came to seek the lost of the human race until he *found* them, but that when he found them he would not leave them until he had adopted some successful and certain means to bring them back to the fold of God.

Q. What is the owner or shepherd represented as doing, after he has returned with his lost sheep ?

A. "And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me ; for I have found my sheep which was lost."

Q. What is the signification of this portion of the parable ?

A. The Redeemer assures us it represents the rejoicing in heaven at the restoration of sinners.

Q. What is the language he utters on this point, at the conclusion of the parable ?

A. "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."

Q. What does this language show ?

A. It teaches us that there is great sympathy in heaven for the sinful creatures of the earth.

Q. Does it not show that the joys of the inhabitants of heaven, are intimately connected with the welfare of sinners ?

A. It does. If the joys of heaven are increased by the repentance of a sinner, the fulness and perfection of those joys cannot be attained to, if there are any sinners who will not or cannot repent.

Q. If the joy of the heavenly host is increased by the repentance of *one* sinner, must not that joy be magnified to a much greater extent by the repentance of a thousand sinners ?

A. It must. Their joy must increase in the same ratio that sinners repent.

Q. Upon what do the joys of heaven depend in this respect?

A. The joys of heaven cannot be full and perfect, unless it is seen or known that *all* sinners will finally repent.

Q. Does the sight of sin, or the knowledge that it is committed, make the Christian unhappy on the earth?

Q. If the Christian dislikes sin as much in the next world as this, would it not make him unhappy to know that any would be compelled to live in sin forever?

Q. If Christians have as tender and good a heart in the life to come, as in this, will they not there love the sinner as much, and be as much interested in his welfare, as here?

Q. How can any expect to be happy there, with a knowledge that sin and misery will exist forever, and prey upon some of their fellow-beings?

Q. If the inhabitants of heaven are perfectly pure and holy, and love their fellow-beings as commanded, would not their happiness be forever destroyed, to know that even *one* of those fellow-beings will always be a miserable sinner?

Q. What kind of feelings would pervade their souls, if the knowledge of such an awful event did not make them unhappy?

LESSON XX.

Parable of the Prodigal Son.

"And he said, A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in; therefore came his father out and entreated him. And he, answering, said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: but as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me; and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad; for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."—(Luke xv. 11—32.)

Q. Does this parable occur in the same chapter with the parable last considered ?

Q. Was it spoken by Jesus for the same object as the last ?

A. It was.

Q. What was that object ?

A. It was to meet the complaint of the Pharisees, that he received *sinners*, and to *justify* himself in so doing.

Q. How is this parable estimated ?

A. The parable of the Prodigal Son is esteemed one of the most pleasing and expressive of all the parables of Christ.

Q. Why is it peculiarly attractive ?

A. Because it is addressed to the finer and better feelings of the human heart, and illustrates the workings of the deepest and tenderest ties which unite mankind together.

Q. What are the most beautiful features of this parable ?

A. The repentance and return of the prodigal, and the affectionate manner in which his father received him.

Q. How does the parable commence ?

A. "A certain man had two sons : and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me."

Q. Was the son authorized to make this demand of his father ?

A. He was ?

Q. What was the custom anciently on this subject ?

A. Dr. Clarke informs us, that "it has been an immemorial custom in the East, for sons to demand and receive their portion of the inheritance during their father's lifetime : and the parent, however aware of the dissipated inclinations of the child, could not legally refuse to comply with the application."

Q. Did the father do as he was requested ?

A. He did—" And he divided unto them his living."

Q. What do you understand by the father's " dividing unto them his living ?"

A. He gave unto each of his two sons such portion of his property as they were at that time entitled to.

Q. What did the youngest son then do ?

A. " And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country."

Q. Why did the son go into a far country ?

A. We may suppose that, feeling inclined to spend his property in vicious practices, which he knew his father would not approve of, and might take means to interrupt, he thought he could best pursue the course he designed in some distant place.

Q. Do sons sometimes act in a similar manner at the present day ?

Q. Is it wise for young persons to do that which they know their parents disapprove ?

Q. Why do parents desire their children to avoid any particular practices and habits ?

A. It is because they know such practices and habits would bring disappointment, misfortune and wretchedness upon their children.

Q. Should young persons persist in doing what their parents advise and request them not to do ?

A. They should not ; but, having all confidence in their parents' superior wisdom and experience, they should give due heed to their counsel, and faithfully follow it.

Q. What are the usual consequences of disregarding parental admonition and advice ?

A. The young, who act thus blindly, in due time are taught, by a sad and miserable experience, of their deep folly in rushing on to sinful practices,

against all the kind advice which has been given them.

Q. Does the parable furnish an instance of this description?

Q. What did the young man do, when he arrived in the far country?

A. He soon commenced the career in which he had promised himself great happiness.

Q. How do you learn this?

A. The parable says that he "there wasted his substance with riotous living."

Q. How do you understand this language?

A. That he commenced a life of idleness and dissipation—mingling with vicious and licentious companions—and giving unbridled rein to every wicked passion—until he speedily squandered all the wealth which his good father had toiled to obtain, and had bestowed upon him.

Q. Was not this exhibiting great ingratitude to his parent, as well as deep corruption of moral principle?

Q. Did this course of life lead him to prosperity and happiness?

A. It did not; but, on the contrary, it led him to speedy wretchedness.

Q. How is this described in the parable?

A. "And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine."

Q. How was this business of tending swine estimated in that age?

A. It was viewed as the most vile and low employment in which a man could engage. Herodotus says that in Egypt, those who tended swine "were not permitted to mingle with civil society, nor to appear in the worship of the gods, nor would the very dregs

of the people have any matrimonial connection with them."

Q. Why was this occupation peculiarly offensive to a Jew?

A. Because the Jews were expressly forbidden by the law of Moses, to eat of swine's flesh, or even to touch it.

Q. To what extremity was the prodigal son reduced?

A. "And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat, and no man gave unto him."

Q. What does this show?

A. It shows that the foolish young man had brought himself into the deepest degradation, and the most abject suffering, by his sinful practices.

Q. If this prodigal had heeded the advice of his parents, would he have reduced himself to this unhappy condition?

Q. What is the invariable effect of leading a life of dishonesty and dissipation?

A. The invariable effect is, to plunge those who lead such a life, into the most miserable circumstances.

Q. What proof is there of the truth of this declaration?

A. The plain declarations of the word of God, and the experience of all men, in all past ages, unite to prove the correctness of this position.

Q. Can we find true happiness in wrong doing?

A. We cannot. The laws of our nature are such that this is utterly impossible; and whoever makes the effort to become happy in this manner, is in total ignorance of the sources from whence human happiness flows, and will find that he has selected the wrong path.

Q. Is it a law of God that all sin shall be punished?

Q. Can we avoid the punishment denounced against sin?

A. We cannot. When crime has once been committed, we *must* suffer the punishment which it deserves—and no skill, nor wisdom, can save us from it.

Q. What do the Scriptures declare on this subject?

A. "Though hand join in hand, the wicked *shall* not be unpunished."—(Prov. xi. 21.)

Q. In representing the prodigal as reducing himself to misery by his wickedness, does the Saviour assert and illustrate the truth of this declaration of God's word?

Q. Is it exceedingly important that these truths should be deeply impressed upon the minds of the young?

Q. What influence would it have upon them?

A. It would have the strongest tendency to deter them from sinful habits.

Q. Is a knowledge of the *certainty* of punishment more efficacious in restraining the evil disposed, than of its *severity*?

A. It is.

Q. Would an understanding that a milder punishment will be *certainly* inflicted on the transgressor, have a greater influence in deterring him from crime, than the threatening of a more awful infliction, with an opportunity afforded to escape it entirely?

A. It would.

Q. What was the fundamental principle of a celebrated writer?

A. "The benevolent and philosophical Beccaria, whose writings first gave an impulse to reform in the criminal codes of continental Europe, states, as his fundamental principle, that *certainty* of punishment, however mild, is a better preventive, than severity."

Q. What effect did the sufferings of the prodigal have upon his mind?

A. They brought him to reflect upon his course, and impressed him with a sense of his folly in choosing the way of wickedness, instead of virtue. His miseries also made him think of his kind father, and of all the comforts he might have enjoyed, had he tarried at home.

Q. How is this expressed in the parable?

A. "And when he came to himself, he said, how many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!"

Q. What is one of the chief objects of all punishment?

A. One of its chief objects is, or should be, to reform the guilty.

Q. Has punishment, when properly inflicted, an influence to induce sorrow for sin and repentance of heart?

Q. Does St. Paul assert and establish this principle?

A. He does. "Now no chastening [punishment] for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."—(Heb. xii. 11.)

Q. What does the same Apostle say of God's design in chastening or punishing us?

A. He says that God chastens us "for our *profit*, that we might be partakers of his holiness."—(Heb. xii. 10.)

Q. What are the words of David, on this subject?

A. "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word."—(Ps. cxix. 67.)

Q. What do we learn from this language?

A. We learn that the afflictions or punishments which God sent upon David, had an influence to

make him keep the words or commandments of the Creator.

Q. Was not this the influence which punishment effected on the prodigal?

LESSON XXI.

Parable of the Prodigal Son—Continued.

Q. What resolution did the prodigal form?

A. "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants."

Q. Was this a wise resolution?

Q. Had punishment now effected its designed and legitimate work upon the prodigal?

Q. Will punishment produce the same effect on all the sinful?

A. It will, when administered wisely and faithfully.

Q. Did the prodigal put his good resolution into effect?

A. He did: "And he arose and came to his father."

Q. How did his father receive him?

A. "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."

Q. What do you say of this reception?

A. It was most kind and merciful, and every way worthy a wise and affectionate father.

Q. Must it not have made a strong impression on the heart of the son?

A. It must have greatly affected him, and made

him more deeply sensible, not only of his own unworthiness, but of the superabounding goodness of his father.

Q. What effect would it have had on the prodigal, had his father met him with frowns and imprecations, and coldly repulsed him from his door?

A. It would undoubtedly have turned him back to his vicious courses, and hardened and confirmed him in sin.

Q. Have kindness and affection a much stronger influence in touching the hearts of the wicked, and turning them from sinful habits, than bitter denunciations and harsh measures?

A. They have. The late temperance reformation most clearly and satisfactorily illustrates and establishes this fact.

Q. How did the prodigal address his father?

A. "And the son said unto him, Father I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."

Q. Did the father harshly upbraid his erring son, and inflict pains and penalties upon him?

A. He did not; but gave him the most undoubted tokens of his forgiveness.

Q. How did he manifest his joy at his son's return?

A. By clothing him in costly garments, and making a great feast. "But the father said to his servants, bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it: and let us eat and be merry. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry."

Q. What did the putting on of the robe, and making the feast, betoken?

A. It was the proof that the father had received his son again into favor.

Q. How was the elder brother effected by the return of the prodigal, and the reception the father gave him?

A. "Now the elder son was in the field : and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant."

Q. What answer did the servant return ?

A. "And he said unto him, thy brother is come ; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound."

Q. How did this intelligence affect the elder brother?

A. "And he was angry and would not go in."

Q. What did the father then do?

A. "Therefore came his father out and entreated him."

Q. How did the son reply?

A. "And he answering, said to his father, lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment ; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf."

Q. In what light does the elder son appear in these transactions?

A. He appears in a very unfavorable light indeed.

Q. Was his anger justifiable?

A. It was unjustifiable and unreasonable in the extreme.

Q. What disposition must he have possessed?

A. He must have possessed a cold and selfish disposition, with but little of that brotherly affection which is so becoming in children of the same parents.

Q. Should we allow the sinfulness of a brother to destroy our affection for him?

A. We should not. Although we may and should, dislike and hate his wicked actions, yet we should be careful not to forget that he is *our brother*, and as such, we should love him with an undying affection.

Q. Should we not rejoice when an erring brother has returned to virtue and duty?

A. We should. If we do not, it is a clear indication that our own hearts are not in such a condition as they should be.

Q. What answer did the father return to the elder brother's complaint?

A. "And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine."

Q. What is it supposed the father meant, when he said to the elder son, "all that I have is thine?"

A. This is supposed to mean that all the property the father had acquired, or would acquire, after giving the two sons each their inheritance, would, at the father's decease, fall into the possession of the elder brother, either by right of inheritance, or as a remuneration for services rendered the father.

Q. What more did the father say in justification of rejoicing at the return of the prodigal?

A. "It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

Q. Was this a good reason for rejoicing?

A. It was. There is nothing that can inspire greater joy in a good and pure heart, than to witness the return of an erring fellow-being to the paths of rectitude—and this joy is greatly increased when the returning one is a near relative.

Q. Is this parable instructive when considered simply as a narration?

A. It is. It groups before us the picture of a good father—a sinful, but repentant son—and an elder

brother, who, although probably correct in his moral habits, yet possessed a narrow and selfish disposition.

Q. Do each of these personages represent a class to be found in all ages?

A. They do. And parents and children may be greatly benefited by imitating the virtues, and avoiding the failings, which the parable presents.

Q. Did Jesus design to give this parable a direct application to the affairs of that age?

A. He did.

Q. Who does he represent by the father of the two sons?

A. He undoubtedly represents our heavenly Father.

Q. Is God the father of all mankind?

A. He is. The Saviour directs us when we pray, to say—"Our Father which art in heaven." And St. Paul said to the Athenian idolators, "We are the offspring of God."—(Acts xvii. 29.)

Q. Who are represented in the parable, by the elder brother?

A. The Pharisees, or more probably, the Jewish nation in general.

Q. Who by the younger brother?

A. The Gentile world.

Q. Are both Jews and Gentiles in reality brethren?

A. They are. The same God made them all; they all descended from the same original parents, and therefore, in every sense, are brethren.

Q. Is this an important truth, and should it ever be kept fresh in our minds?

A. It is, and should. Whoever forgets the common brotherhood of our race, loses sight of the vital spirit of Christianity, and is in a fair way to cherish all the narrow selfishness and hardness of heart, exhibited by the elder brother in the parable.

Q. What is represented by the younger son taking

a journey into a far country, and wasting his substance in dissipation ?

A. This represents the wandering away of the Gentiles from the worship of the true God, and their falling into idolatry, and all the degradation which it brings upon its adherents.

Q. What should we understand by the wretchedness of the prodigal ?

A. This is a figure of the moral and religious starvation which those suffer, who are given up to idolatry.

Q. What does the return of the prodigal represent ?

A. In this the Saviour represented the return of the Gentile world to the true religion of heaven, and to the worship of their Creator, through the mediation and reign of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world.

Q. Was the Redeemer sent to save the whole world—Gentiles as well as Jews.

A. He was. St. John declares, "We have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world."—(1 John iv. 14.)

Q. Will Jesus accomplish the work he came to do ?

A. Christ answers this question : "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to *finish his work!*"—(John iv. 34.) And St. Paul says that God "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."—(1 Tim. ii. 4.)

Q. What should we understand by the eager gladness with which the father received his prodigal son ?

A. We should understand by this representation, the willingness with which God receives to his favor and approbation, the wicked part of mankind, when they are brought home to his truth, through the instructions of the gospel of Christ.

Q. What does the feasting and rejoicing represent?

A. We may understand it as representing the great jubilee which will be celebrated, when the last sinner in the universe shall repent and be brought home to God.

Q. What may we believe will then be fulfilled?

A. We may believe the vision of John will then be fulfilled: "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever."—(Rev. v. 13.)

Q. Is not the belief in the arrival of such a time, calculated to fill the heart of the real Christian with emotions of unspeakable joy?

Q. What is the unwillingness of the elder brother to go in and take part in the rejoicing on account of his brother's return, designed to represent?

A. It represents the anger and indignation of the Pharisees, and the Jews in general, at the declarations of Christ, that the Gentiles should be received into divine favor, and rank as high as themselves in the estimation of God.

Q. Were the Jews exceedingly prejudiced against the Gentiles?

A. They were.

Q. What gave them great offence?

A. Nothing could give them greater offence than to insist that the Gentiles were, like themselves, the children of God, and should share with them in the blessings of the common Father of all.

Q. How does the Saviour represent their blindness and selfishness?

A. "Wo unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer

ye them that are entering, to go in."—(Matt. xxiii. 13.)

Q. Must not the parable we have now considered, have been a cutting rebuke to Jewish pride and selfishness?

Q. Are there still some elder brothers even among professed Christians?

A. It is to be apprehended there are.

Q. How may we know them?

A. By their declaring that if all mankind are permitted to enter heaven, they have no wish to go in themselves.

Q. What does this show?

A. It shows that one of the most precious truths ever proclaimed to man, gives them pain, whereas it would give them the highest joy, were they truly Christians—it shows that they are strangers to the spirit of that father who received the returning prodigal with open arms—and moreover, that all the bitter hatred and narrow selfishness of the elder brother still rankles in their hearts!

Q. Do all such especially need to be born again?

A. They do. None possessing such feelings are prepared to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Q. Is the elder son, (the Jews,) still standing without, and refusing to go in and join his brother (the Gentiles) in rejoicing in the Father's presence?

A. He is.

Q. How long will he remain in this posture?

A. "Until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." Then the elder son will enter also; for the Apostle declares, "And so all Israel shall be saved."—(Rom. xi. 25, 26.)

LESSON XXII.

Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died, and was buried: and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue: for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."—(Luke xvi. 19—31.)

Q. What important point should we first decide, in relation to this passage of Scripture?

A. We should first endeavor to determine whether it is a *parable*, or a *literal history* of certain events which actually took place.

Q. Are there many who maintain that it is a *literal history*?

A. There are.

Q. What is one of the reasons offered for this opinion?

A. One of the reasons is, that Luke in recording it, does not say it is a parable—he does not say, “Another parable spake he unto them, saying, There was a certain rich man,” etc., as at the commencement of some of the parables.

Q. But may not the same be said of many of the acknowledged parables of our Lord?

A. It may. Several of the most important parables are recorded without any distinct *declaration* that they are parables—such as the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, and many others.

Q. When a narration is not said to be a parable, how must we ascertain whether it is such or not?

A. We must judge by the structure of the language, and the evident design of its introduction.

Q. Has the passage now under consideration all the features of a parable?

A. It has. Jesus uttered no language which bears more strongly every mark and characteristic of an allegory or parable, than this. The personages introduced, the locations of the places in which they are said to be, and the conversation they hold with each other, all are strikingly of an allegorical description.

Q. What would be the effect of considering the passage as a literal history?

A. It would lead to the most singular and ridiculous absurdities, and violate all reasonable and scriptural conceptions of the condition of the inhabitants of the future world.

Q. Can you enumerate some of the reasons why it cannot be received as an actual history?

A. One objection is, it would teach that a certain man was *lost*, simply because he was *rich*, and another was *saved* because he was *poor*.

Q. Does the passage say that the rich man was vicious and wicked?

A. It does not. All that is alleged respecting

him is, that he was rich, that he was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day.

Q. Is it declared in the Scriptures, or is it believed by any, that whoever are rich, and dress finely, and live well, will be lost forever ?

A. It is not. If this were really the case, multitudes of those who hold the highest rank in Christian churches, are in circumstances of the greatest danger.

Q. Is there authority for bringing any charge against the moral character of the rich man ?

A. There is not. Dr. Clarke says, " In comparison of thousands, he was not only blameless, but he was a virtuous man."

Q. Is the beggar described as being a pious, Christian man ?

A. He is not. All that is said in regard to his characteristics, is that he was a beggar, was full of sores, and desired to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table.

Q. Are we authorized to say that the moral character of the beggar was any better than that of the rich man ?

A. We are not.

Q. Are there any who believe that men will be saved, simply because they are poor ?

A. There are not.

Q. Is there anything to contradict the belief that the beggar was reduced to want by a profligate life ?

A. There is not.

Q. Does not a literal construction of this portion of the passage confound all received opinions of the grounds upon which we should hope for salvation ?

A. It does.

Q. What other objection is there against receiving the passage as a real history ?

A. Such construction would compel us to believe

that when the beggar died, he actually and literally went into the bosom of Abraham.

Q. Is not this idea absurd in the extreme?

Q. Can it be said that this expression is figurative?

A. It cannot, unless it be allowed that the whole account is figurative. It would violate all rules of language to say, a part of the transactions were figurative, and another part literal. It should all be considered strictly literal, or all strictly allegorical.

Q. Are there other difficulties in the way of a literal construction?

A. There are. It would teach that heaven and hell are so near, that the inhabitants can see and converse with each other.

Q. If there was a hell of literal fire so near heaven when the Saviour uttered the passage under consideration, are we not bound to believe that it will always remain there, so long as it continues?

Q. If the inhabitants of heaven can converse with those of hell, can they not also hear their groans, and wailings, and shrieks?

Q. Can any reasonable being suppose that heaven is located in this manner?

Q. Could the inhabitants of heaven be happy with such a sight before their eyes, and such sounds ringing in their ears?

A. They could not. The thought is most abhorrent and repulsive.

Q. Could you be happy in this world, if you saw, every day, some poor wretch burning to death before you?

Q. And yet if in heaven you could witness such a sight unmoved, how must you have been changed?

A. Our hearts must have become hardened and steeled against the promptings of compassion.

Q. Can any who possess the least sensibility, desire to go to heaven, if they must there look upon their father or mother, their brothers or sisters, or

some of their dear friends, and countless multitudes of their fellow-beings, writhing in flames of fire, and hear them shrieking in agony, and calling for water to cool their tongues?

Q. What kind of hearts must those possess, who can wish to enter such a heaven?

Q. Must not these sights be seen, and these sounds be heard, by those who are in heaven, if the account of the Rich Man and Lazarus is a *literal* history?

Q. Is not the supposition that such a state of things exists in the next world, the most unreasonable that the mind can well entertain?

Q. Do any enlightened Christians believe that when they arrive in the abodes of bliss, they will have to witness such an abhorrent and repulsive scene?

A. They do not.

Q. What are they bound, then, to believe?

A. They are bound to believe that the narration in regard to the Rich Man and Lazarus, is not a *literal* history, but strictly and wholly a *parable*.

Q. Have you not already seen enough to satisfy you that it is a *parable*?

Q. Is it the opinion of the most intelligent and respectable commentators, ancient as well as modern, and of all denominations, that this is strictly a *parable*?

A. It is.

Q. What does Dr. Lightfoot say on the subject?

A. He speaks of it as a mark of credulity and ignorance, to suppose this is a *literal* history; and in addition, remarks as follows—"That it was a *parable* not only the consent of *all expositors* may assure us, but the *thing itself* speaks it."

Q. What is the language of Dr. Whitby?

A. He says, "this is only a *parable*, and not a real history of what was actually done."

Q. What says Hammond?

A. "This is not a story, but a *parable*."

Q. Does Dr. Gill, the Baptist commentator, represent this portion of Scripture as a parable?

A. He does.

Q. Did the ancient and learned Theophylact, also describe it as a parable?

A. He did.

Q. What is the language of Dr. Proudfit?

A. In relation to the Rich Man and Lazarus, he says, "We are not to conclude that such persons *actually existed*, but they are introduced for the occasion, to urge more strongly the moral intended."

Q. What is the testimony of Saurin, the eloquent and celebrated French divine, on this point?

A. He says that it "seems not unlikely" that the whole is a parable, and adds, "it is *certain* it cannot be taken in a strictly literal sense."

Q. What does Saurin say in regard to the manner in which the account of the Rich Man and Lazarus is introduced in ancient manuscripts of the New Testament?

A. He says certain "critics affirm, some ancient manuscripts introduce the passage with these words, 'Jesus spake a parable, saying, There was a certain rich man,' etc."

Q. Does Archbishop Tillotson agree with Saurin in asserting that some ancient manuscripts commenced the account in this manner?

A. He does.

Q. It being thus established that the passage is a *parable*, should it not always be understood and construed as a parable?

Q. What is said by an able writer, in regard to the nature of parables?

A. "A parable may be fitly compared to a nut, of which the *shell* represents the image of the parable, and the *meat* the fact or doctrine to be inculcated; as the shell protects the meat, and assists to bring it to

perfection, so the image illustrates and develops the doctrine."

Q. What farther does he say on the subject?

A. "Hence, a person who should receive the literal sense of the imagery, as the final object aimed at in the parable, would be like the man who should retain the *shell* of the nut, and cast the *meat* away."
— *Whittemore on the Parables*.

Q. Would it be proper to consider a portion of it as parabolical and a portion as literal?

A. It would not. A writer on this subject remarks — "It is the criterion of a parable, that it be consistent throughout, and that the literal be never confounded with the figurative sense."

Q. How should we understand the various declarations of the parable?

A. We should understand them in no sense as *literal*, but as *figurative* representations of certain important truths, which the Saviour adopted this method to convey to his hearers.

Q. To whom did Christ address this parable?

A. To the Jews.

Q. May we not rationally suppose that it was designed by its author, to represent certain events intimately connected with the circumstances of the Jewish nation?

A. We may.

Q. From what source is it believed the Redeemer drew the materials of this parable?

A. He undoubtedly drew them from the notions which prevailed among the Jews at that age, in regard to the condition of the dead.

Q. Can we suppose those notions strictly correct?

A. We cannot. It is the opinion of Dr. Campbell, and most other commentators, that at that time the religious belief of the Jews was very much corrupted by heathen fables and traditions, especially in regard to the future world.

Q. In making use of these fabulous notions to construct his parable, did Jesus endorse them as true?

A. He did not. He simply repeated the popular phraseology of the day, for the purpose of impressing the more deeply an important truth upon the minds of the Jews. But in doing this, he no more assented to the correctness of this phraseology, than he assented to the truth of the Jewish supposition that people were possessed of demons, or the spirits of wicked men, because he allowed them to say he cast out demons, when he but cured them of some natural disease.

LESSON XXII.

Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus—Continued.

Q. What great occurrences did the Saviour design to represent, under the figures of this parable?

A. He evidently designed to represent the casting away of the Jews in consequence of their blind and obstinate unbelief, and the entrance of the Gentiles into the gospel kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Q. How does the parable commence?

A. "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day."

Q. Who did Jesus design to represent by the rich man?

A. There is a diversity of opinion on this point among commentators. Some suppose he represents the Jewish High Priest, others that he represents the Scribes and Pharisees, and others that he represents the Jewish people at large.

Q. To which of these suppositions does the weight of testimony seem to incline?

A. To the latter; although the point is not one of great importance.

Q. How does the description given of the rich man, represent the Jews?

A. His being rich, and clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day, is a striking figure both of the spiritual and temporal blessings, advantages and privileges, which the Jews, as the chosen people of God, had for ages enjoyed. In these respects they had long been truly rich, while the rest of the world had been poor and needy.

Q. How does the parable proceed?

A. "And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores."

Q. Who does the beggar represent?

A. He represents the Gentile world. They were poor in divine grace—poor in all spiritual blessings—no revelation had been made to them—no divine light had been shed upon their minds—they were beggars for what small scraps of religious knowledge they could obtain.

Q. What do the sores of the beggar represent, and the dogs licking the sores?

A. They are a figure of the errors which preyed upon the Gentiles, filling them with spiritual disease, and of the vain efforts of their philosophers to heal them by the application of the poor wisdom of this world.

Q. What may we understand by the hunger of the beggar, and his desire to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table?

A. We may understand by this, the spiritual hunger for divine truth which preyed upon the Gentiles,

and which is felt in every unenlightened mind, and their desire to obtain even the smallest portions of that heavenly knowledge which can alone satisfy the soul.

Q. What became of the beggar?

A. "And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom."

Q. What is the meaning of this language?

A. The death of the beggar represents the great change which took place in the condition of the Gentiles, at the proclamation of the gospel.

Q. Is not a remarkable change in the condition of people, often represented in the Scriptures as passing from death to life?

A. It is. "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead."—(Rom. vi. 13.) "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins."—(Eph. ii. 1.)

Q. Is not a striking change also represented by passing from life to death?

A. It is. "For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died."—(Rom. vii. 9.) "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."—(Colos. iii. 3.) "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein."—(Rom. vi. 2.)

Q. Does Abraham's bosom, signify heaven above, a place of everlasting happiness?

A. It does not. This phrase is not used in any instance, in the Scriptures, to convey such an idea.

Q. How should this language be understood?

A. It is a figure representing that the Gentiles should come into the belief of the same gospel that was preached to Abraham, (Gal. iii. 8,) and that Abraham believed and rejoiced in. By receiving this gospel, they would be brought into spiritual communion with Abraham, and enjoy fellowship with him in the same precious faith.

Q. What is the language of Bishop Pearce on this phrase?

A. "This figure is drawn from the customs of the Jews at their feasts. When reclining on their couches at table, they sometimes placed their heads on one another's bosom, as a sign of equality and strict union among the guests."

Q. Does St. Paul represent those who adopt the faith of the gospel, as being *with* Abraham, and blessed with him?

A. He does: "So then they which be of faith, are blessed *with* faithful Abraham."—(Gal. iii. 9.)

Q. What is meant by angels carrying Lazarus into Abraham's bosom?

A. This is an allusion to the angels, messengers, or preachers of the gospel, by whom the Gentiles were brought into the belief of the same promises and faith in Christ with which Abraham was blessed.

Q. What befel the rich man?

A. "The rich man also died and was buried."

Q. What is signified by the death of the rich man?

A. It represents the memorable change which took place in the condition of the Jews, at the setting up of the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ. They were no longer to be the chosen people of God; but were to be cast into outer darkness, into spiritual blindness and unbelief, while the Gentiles were to take their place as the depositaries of the religion of heaven.

Q. How does the parable represent the condition of the rich man after his death?

A. "And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom."

Q. If we should give this portion of the parable a *literal* construction, should we not break away from

all just principles of interpretation, and become involved in a mass of absurdities?

A. We should. Every correct rule of criticism demands that this language should be understood as truly figurative as any other part of the parable.

Q. How then should we proceed?

A. We should understand the rich man being in hell, as an allegorical or fictitious representation, and look *beyond* the language to find the real and true meaning of Christ.

Q. Is the original word translated *hell* in this parable, the same as that rendered *hell* in the parable of the Offending Hand?

A. It is not.

Q. What is the original word in that parable?

A. It is *Gehenna*.—(See Lesson VI.)

Q. What is the original word in this parable?

A. It is the Greek word *Hades*.

Q. What word in the Hebrew language, corresponds with *Hades* in the Greek?

A. The word *Sheol*.

Q. Was the Old Testament anciently translated from the original Hebrew into the Greek?

A. It was. About 277 years before Christ, this translation was made by seventy-two learned Jews. The translation is called the *Septuagint*—the translators are denominated the *LXX*.

Q. How did these translators render *Sheol*?

A. In almost every instance throughout the Old Testament, they translated it *Hades*.

Q. Does *Hades* in the Greek of the New Testament, mean the same as *Sheol* in the Hebrew, and *Hades* in the Greek, of the Old Testament?

A. It does.

Q. How, then, shall we ascertain the meaning of the word *Hades*, or hell, in this parable, and in other portions of the New Testament?

A. By ascertaining its meaning in the Old Testament.

Q. Do the Hebrew *Sheol*, or the Greek *Hades*, ever signify, in the Old Testament, a place of literal torment?

A. They do not.

Q. Should *Hades* ever have this meaning in the New Testament?

A. It should not; there is no proof of the correctness of such a signification.

Q. Did not our translators err in rendering this word *hell*, in our English Bible?

A. Such is the opinion of Dr. Campbell. He says, "in my judgment it [*Hades*] ought never in Scripture to be rendered *hell*, or at least in the sense wherein that word is now universally understood by Christians."

Q. Does Dr. Campbell reiterate this opinion?

A. He does. In another place he remarks—"It is very plain, that neither in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, nor in the New, does the word *Hades* convey the meaning which the present English word *hell*, in the Christian usage, always conveys to our minds."

Q. What do we learn from the language of this eminent critic?

A. We learn, that wherever the word *Hades* is rendered *hell*, in the New Testament, it *does not mean* such a place or such a state as many at this day suppose *hell* to be.

Q. In how many instances, and where, does the word *Hades* occur in the Greek of the New Testament?

A. It occurs in *eleven* instances, as follow:—Matt. xi. 23—xvi. 18; Luke x. 15—xvi. 23; Acts ii. 27—ii. 31; 1 Cor. xv. 55; Rev. i. 18—vi. 8—xx. 13—xx. 14.

Q. How is *Hades* translated in these cases?

A. It is translated *hell*, in all the instances except one ; but Dr. Campbell instructs us that it has not in any case the meaning now generally attached to the word *hell*—i. e. it does not mean a place or state of endless suffering.

Q. What is the language of Wakefield ?

A. He says, "It must be remembered that Hades nowhere means hell, *gehenna*, in any author whatsoever, sacred or profane."

Q. How is *Hades* translated in the one instance mentioned above ?

A. It is translated *grave*—"O grave, [hades,] where is thy victory?"—(1 Cor. xv. 55.)

Q. Would it not have been as proper to have used the word *hell* as the translation of *Hades*, in this instance, as in any other portion of the New Testament ?

A. It would.

Q. Does not this circumstance prove that our translators were governed and biassed much, by their own sectarian notions, in rendering certain words and passages ?

Q. What was the original and true meaning of the Hebrew *Sheol*, and the Greek *Hades*, of the Old and New Testaments ?

A. They mean the state of the dead, without any reference to their happiness or misery—the place to which the Jews believed the souls of all the dead went when they left the body.

Q. Is this the sole and invariable meaning of these words ?

A. It is.

Q. What is the opinion of Dr. Whitby in regard to the signification of *Sheol* and *Hades* ?

A. He says, "Sheol, throughout the Old Testament, and *Hades* in the Septuagint, answering to it, signify, not the place of punishment, or of the souls

of bad men only, but the grave only, or the place of death."

Q. What testimony is there on this point in Leigh's *Critica Sacra*?

A. "All learned Hebricians know that *Sheol* (or Hades) is more proper for the grave than for hell; and that the Hebrews have *no word* proper for hell, as we take *hell*."

Q. What does Dr. Campbell say in regard to the ancient Jewish views of the state of the dead?

A. He says their views of the state of the dead "are always represented under those figures which suggest something dreadful, dark, and silent, about which the most prying eye and listening ear, can acquire no information. The term *Hades*, is well adapted to express this idea."

Q. What is the opinion of Professor Stuart?

A. He declares that *Sheol* (*Hades*) in most texts where it occurs, means the *grave*, the *under-world*, or the *region of the dead*.

Q. What is said in the "Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge," on this subject?

A. "Both words *Sheol* and *Hades* are employed to express the state of the dead, in its most comprehensive point of view; including the grave as the invisible residence of the body, and the world of spirits as the invisible abode of the soul. * * * * They are often *very improperly* rendered *hell* in our common version."

LESSON XXIII.

Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus—Continued.

Q. How does Lowth describe the origin of the Jewish views respecting the condition of the dead?

A. "He says, "The *condition*, the form, the habitation of departed spirits, were concealed from the Hebrews, equally with the rest of mankind. Nor did revelation afford them the smallest assistance on this subject; not, perhaps, because the divine providence was disposed to withhold this information from them, but because the present condition of the human mind renders it incapable of receiving it."

Q. How does the same writer go on to describe the source of the Hebrew notions in regard to Hades?

A. "Thus, observing that after death, the body returned to the earth, and that it was deposited in a sepulchre, a sort of popular notion prevailed among the Hebrews, as well as among other nations, that the life which succeeded the present, was to be passed beneath the earth."

Q. What more does he say on this subject?

A. "And to this notion even the sacred prophets were obliged to allude occasionally, if they wished to be understood by the people on this subject. Hence the meaning is evident when the deceased are said to "descend into the pit," "to the nether parts of the earth," etc.

Q. Can you quote one or two passages where the same word *Hades* occurs in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, which in the parable is translated *hell*?

A. The patriarch Jacob, supposing his son Joseph was dead, exclaimed—"I will go down into the grave [*Hades*] unto my son mourning."—(Gen. xxxvii. 35.) "If mischief befall him [Benjamin] by the way in which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave," [*Hades*.] —(Gen. xlii. 38.)

Q. What was the declaration of Job?

A. "Oh that thou wouldst hide me in the grave!" [Hades.]—(Job. xiv. 13.)

Q. Would it not have been as proper to have translated *Hades* in these passages, by the word *hell*, as in the parable now under consideration?

A. It would.

Q. If *Hades* was rightly translated in the above passages, was it not improperly translated *hell*, in the New Testament?

Q. Had the Jews, in the days of Christ, imbibed the notion that there was a place of happiness and a place of punishment in Hades?

A. They had.

Q. Did they obtain these views from their Old Testament writers?

A. They did not. The Old Testament is silent on these points. Dr. Campbell says, "On this subject of a future state, we find a considerable difference in the popular opinions of the Jews in our Saviour's time, from those which prevailed in the days of the ancient prophets."

Q. From whence did they derive these opinions in regard to happiness and misery in Hades?

A. From the heathen nations with whom they held intercourse.

Q. What does Campbell say in regard to the agreement between the opinions of the Jews, at the time of Christ's advent, in regard to the happiness and misery of the inhabitants of Hades, and the views of the heathen upon the same topics?

A. He says "The general train of thinking in both, [Jews and heathen,] came pretty much to coincide. The Greek *Hades* they found well adapted to express the Hebrew *Sheol*. This they came to conceive as including different sorts of habitations, for ghosts of different character."

Q. How does Bishop Lowth describe the origin of the heathen notions respecting the infernal regions?

A. In speaking of sepulchres, he refers to the Cimmerians, an ancient people, who inhabited dark caves, and adds, "It is evident that Homer first, and Virgil after him, derived their notions of the infernal regions from these Cimmerian caves of Campania."

Q. Will Hades [hell] be finally destroyed?

A. It will, let it mean what it may. God says, through his prophet—"O grave, [hades, hell,] I will be thy destruction."—(Hosea xiii. 14.)

Q. What do we learn from these investigations?

A. We learn that in representing the rich man as being tormented in Hades, Jesus but repeated the popular notions of that age, in regard to the condition of the wicked in the invisible world.

Q. In referring to these views and making his parable conform to them, did he endorse their truth?

A. We have already seen, he did not.

Q. How does Macknight view this point?

A. He says, "If it is thought the parable is formed on the Grecian mythology, it will not at all follow that our Lord *approved* of what the common people thought or spake concerning these matters, agreeably to the notions and language of the Greeks."

Q. What does he add to these remarks?

A. "In parabolic discourses, provided the doctrines inculcated are strictly true, the terms in which they are inculcated may be such as are most familiar to the ears of the vulgar, and the images made use of such as they are best acquainted with."

Q. What did the Saviour signify by representing the rich man as seeing "Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom?"

A. When the Jews had been cast away for their unbelief, and were no longer the chosen instruments of God, to communicate his truth to the world, they saw that the Gentiles occupied their former place—that the Gentiles were now with Abraham in the be-

lief of the promises of God, while they had stumbled into ruin.

Q. Have the Jews always, since the establishment of the gospel, seemed apparently conscious that God had set them aside, and chosen another people to adopt the faith of Abraham and spread his religion through the world?

A. They have.

Q. How did the rich man address Abraham?

A. "And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame."

Q. What does this language represent?

A. It represents the calamities, the sufferings and woes, which came upon the Jews, in consequence of their blindness and unbelief, and their rejection of the Redeemer.

Q. How are these sufferings represented in other parables?

A. They are represented by being cast into outer darkness, where there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Q. What was Abraham's reply?

A. "But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."

Q. Does Abraham acknowledge him as a son, and speak kindly to him?

Q. When was the life-time of the rich man or the Jewish people?

A. It was in the days of their prosperity, when they were the chosen people of God, and stood high in the estimation of heaven.

Q. Did they then receive and enjoy good things?

A. They did. Every blessing that a people could

possess was theirs ; the bounties of their Creator were liberally bestowed upon them.

Q. What is meant by Lazarus, at the same time, having evil things ?

A. This language represents the entire destitution of the Gentiles, of all spiritual light and enjoyment.

Q. Was the condition of the Jews and the Gentiles, in these respects, entirely reversed, at the establishment of the kingdom of the Redeemer ?

Q. What more did Abraham say ?

A. " And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed ; so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot ; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence."

Q. What are the words used in Tyndale's translation, instead of the phrase " there is a great gulf fixed ? "

A. He translates the original, " there is a great space set."

Q. What does this great gulf or space, represent ?

A. It represents some serious obstacle which intervenes, to prevent the union of the Jews and the Gentiles, in the belief and enjoyment of the gospel.

Q. What is that obstacle ?

A. It is the stubborn and inveterate *unbelief* of the Jews.

Q. Did this *unbelief*, as a wide and deep gulf, separate the Jews from the first converts to Christianity ?

A. It did.

Q. Has the same gulf—the same rank *unbelief*—continued to separate the Jews from the believers in Christ, unto the present day ?

A. It has. The Jews in all ages, since the establishment of the gospel, have stubbornly refused to believe in Jesus ; and the gulf of *unbelief* is as wide now as when the parable was first spoken.

Q. What did the rich man then say ?

A. "Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house : for I have five brethren ; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment."

Q. How shall we understand this language ?

A. There has been some difference of opinion in regard to the meaning of this part of the parable. It would seem, however, that Jesus designed to represent by the five brethren, those Jews who were at that time living in different cities and countries out of Judea.

Q. What makes this supposition probable ?

A. While the Jews in Jerusalem and Judea were suffering in "the furnace of the Lord," those dreadful calamities which were brought upon them by the Romans, and which resulted in their final overthrow and dispersion, it was natural they should desire that their brethren in other parts of the Roman empire, might be saved from the horrors in which they were plunged. This desire seems represented in the request of the rich man, that Lazarus might go to them and save them from such a fate.

Q. What was Abraham's reply ?

A. "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them."

Q. What do you understand by, "Moses and the prophets ?"

A. The books of the Old Testament.

Q. Have not the Jews, wherever they have been scattered, had Moses and the prophets in their possession ?

A. They have.

Q. If they understood and believed the Old Testament, would they not have believed in Jesus Christ ?

A. They would. For his coming was promised

and foretold in their Scriptures, in the most clear and explicit language.

Q. How does the parable close ?

A. " And he said, Nay, Father Abraham ; but if one went to them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

Q. Was the truth of the declaration of Abraham fully verified ?

A. It was.

Q. Did not one arise from the dead ?

A. Lazarus was raised from the dead, and Jesus himself also arose from the dead ; but neither of these amazing events convinced the Jews of the divine authority of Christ, nor brought them to submit to his reign.

Q. Does the interpretation which we have given to this important parable, agree in its general features, with the interpretation of many learned and eminent commentators ?

A. It does. It agrees with the opinions of Lightfoot, Whitby, Bate, and others, as well as with those of Theophylact, a celebrated writer of the eleventh century.

LESSON XXIV.

Parable of the Ten Virgins.

" Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them ; but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made,

Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."—(Matt. xxv. 1—13.)

Q. From what did the Redeemer draw the scenes of this parable?

A. From the marriage customs which prevailed among the Jews and other Eastern nations, at that age.

Q. How are the ten virgins represented as proceeding?

A. It is said they "took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom."

Q. Can you explain this allusion?

A. Writers on ancient customs inform us, that on the evening of a wedding, the bridegroom, accompanied by a great procession of relatives and friends, repaired to the house of the bride, to claim her and conduct her to his own residence. These processions were generally very gorgeous. They were attended by torch-bearers, and with music, and every display that the wealth of the parties could allow.

Q. How was he welcomed at the house of the bride?

A. It was usual, on such occasions, for the immediate neighbors of the bride, generally young women, to furnish themselves with torches, and go out to meet and welcome the bridegroom on his approach.

Q. What privilege did they obtain for this service?

A. Those who thus met the bridegroom, were al-

lowed to enter with him, and partake of the marriage feast, and participate in all the festivities of the occasion.

Q. How are the virgins in the parable described ?

A. It is said that "five of them were wise, and five were foolish."

Q. How did five manifest that they were foolish, and five that they were wise ?

A. "They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them : but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept."

Q. How do you understand the last declaration ?

A. It frequently happened that the bridegroom did not come as early as he was expected, and those who were waiting to welcome him, would consequently become fatigued with their long watching—and moreover their lamps or torches would burn low and need replenishing.

Q. How does the parable proceed ?

A. "And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh ; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps."

Q. What was the predicament of the foolish virgins ?

A. When it was announced that the bridegroom with his procession drew near, and it became necessary for those who were to welcome him, to trim their lamps, the foolish virgins found themselves destitute of oil.

Q. How did they endeavor to remedy their carelessness ?

A. "And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil ; for our lamps are gone out."

Q. Did they obtain their request ?

A. They did not. "The wise answered, saying, Not so ; lest there be not enough for us and you :

but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves."

Q. What happened while they went to buy?

A. "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready, went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not."

Q. Did the forgetfulness of the five virgins deprive them of their anticipated enjoyments?

A. It did. While they were absent purchasing the oil with which they should have supplied themselves in the first place, the bridegroom came, and the wise virgins welcomed him, and went in to the marriage with him, and the door was shut.

Q. Why were the foolish virgins refused admittance when they desired to come in?

A. Because they were not there to welcome the bridegroom when he arrived. The door was closed the moment the procession entered; and they, being absent purchasing their oil, did not arrive until it was too late, and were necessarily shut out.

Q. To whom did our Lord utter this parable?

A. It was addressed to his disciples, at a private interview he held with them on the Mount of Olives, shortly before his crucifixion.

Q. Did he deliver a long discourse to them at that time?

A. He did. It occupies the whole of the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of Matthew.

Q. What was the object of this discourse?

A. The disciples had inquired of Jesus when he should come to establish formally and permanently his gospel kingdom on the earth—and they desired to know particularly what would be the signs of his coming, and of the end of the world, (*aionos—age.*)

Q. Was it in answer to these inquiries that these two chapters were spoken?

A. It was. The Redeemer went on to show what should take place previous to his coming—the signs which should foretel his approach, and the time when he should actually come with his angels, to bring the world, or Jewish age, to an end.

Q. What was the especial object of this parable of the ten virgins?

A. It was intended to impress upon the minds of his followers the necessity of *watchfulness*, to observe the signs of his coming.

Q. Is there any particular evidence that the parable was uttered to make them thus watchful?

A. There is. At the conclusion of the parable, Jesus exclaims, by way of applying it—"Watch therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

Q. Would there have been any propriety in telling his *disciples* to *watch*, if the coming of the Son of man was not to take place in their day?

Q. Must not those people be laboring under a mistake, who suppose the Son of man has not even yet come?

Q. How should we understand the phrase "kingdom of heaven," in this instance?

A. This phrase here represents the converts to Christianity, at that age. As though Christ had said, "Then shall my followers be likened," etc.

Q. Who are represented by the five foolish virgins?

A. They represent the careless and faithless followers of Jesus, who, although they had professed to become his disciples, nevertheless paid little heed to his injunctions, and were doubtful whether he would come to judge that generation, as he had declared.

Q. Who do the five wise virgins represent?

A. They may be understood as representing those disciples who had been truly converted to Christ—who placed the most implicit confidence in his teachings, and who amply prepared themselves for the coming of the Lord.

Q. What personage is alluded to under the figure of the bridegroom?

A. Jesus Christ.

Q. How is the coming of the bridegroom described?

A. "And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him."

Q. What important event is prefigured in this language?

A. It refers to the spiritual coming of Christ in that generation, when he would destroy the wicked Jews—bring that dispensation or world to an end—establish his kingdom, and commence his reign as Mediator and King.

Q. What should we understand by the five virgins having no oil to trim their lamps?

A. In this language Jesus represents that at his coming, a portion of his professed followers would be unprepared to receive him. They would be so indifferent to the signs which denoted his approach, that they would be taken by surprise, and be in a condition which would prevent their saving themselves from the overwhelming calamities which then visited the Jews.

Q. What is represented by the wise virgins having their lamps trimmed and in order?

A. This alludes to the watchfulness of a part of the followers of the Redeemer. They would notice the signs of his coming, and be all prepared to go into a place of security, where they would be saved from the evils which were then to afflict Judea.

Q. In what light should we understand the exclamation of the foolish virgins—"Lord, Lord, open to us,"—and the answer of the bridegroom, "I know you not?"

A. These things represent that the careless and faithless followers of Jesus would speedily see their folly, and would earnestly desire to participate with the faithful disciples in the safety which they would enjoy. But it would then be too late. The dreadful calamities of the age will have arrived, and they would be overwhelmed with the unbelieving and wicked Jews.

Q. Did these things actually take place, as foretold by the Saviour?

A. They did. About forty years after this parable was spoken, Jerusalem was destroyed—the Jews perished in vast multitudes—and the remainder were carried into captivity. And while the faithful followers of Jesus were preserved from these calamities, those who had not proved faithful and obedient were plunged into common ruin with the Jews.

Q. Does the explanation we have given of this parable agree with the views of many eminent commentators?

A. It does.

Q. What is the opinion of Bishop Pearce?

A. He says the parable relates to what was to happen at the destruction of the Jewish state.

Q. What is the language of Kenrick?

A. He says that the words which Christ uttered at the conclusion of the parable—"watch, therefore," etc.—"show that it refers to the coming of Christ for the destruction of Jerusalem."

Q. What does the same author say of the wise virgins?

A. "The wise virgins * * * * are sincere Christians, who, by the constant practice of the duties of piety and virtue, would secure his favor,

and, being always prepared for his coming, would escape the judgments that were coming upon the Jewish nation."

Q. Who does he suppose the foolish virgins to represent?

A. "The foolish virgins * * * * are those who profess themselves Christians, but want those substantial virtues which are necessary to recommend them to the favor of Christ; and when he came, would be disowned and rejected by him, and suffered to perish with the others."

LESSON XXV.

Parable of the Unfaithful Servant.

"For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained besides them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came, and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents; behold, I have gained two other talents besides them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed; and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth; lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strewed; thou oughtest, therefore, to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take, therefore, the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath."—(Matt. xxv. 14—29.)

Q. Is this parable found in the same chapter with the parable considered in the last lesson?

A. It occurs in the same chapter, and immediately succeeds it.

Q. What was the general object of the Saviour in uttering this parable?

A. His object seems to have been to impress upon his followers the necessity of *faithfulness*, in the use of the advantages given them, as the last parable was to inspire them with *watchfulness*.

Q. How is the parable introduced?

A. "For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country."

Q. What do you say of this language?

A. The words, "the kingdom of heaven," are not in the original, but were added by the translators.

Q. Is it generally considered that these were the proper words to be introduced?

A. It is not. Dr. Campbell's opinion is that originally the parable commenced, "The Son of man is as a man travelling in a far country," etc.

Q. Should we understand the parable as representing the Saviour in the man who travelled into a far country?

A. We should.

Q. What is meant by his travelling into a far country?

A. This is supposed to mean the ascension of Jesus into heaven after his resurrection, from whence he returned to the earth, to judge that wicked generation—to bring the old world or dispensation to an end, and establish new heavens and a new earth, or the new gospel kingdom and reign.

Q. What is the man represented as doing, before he departed on his journey?

A. He “called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.”

Q. How much did he give to each?

A. “Unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability.”

Q. How much money is a *talent*?

A. Some authors estimate a talent of silver at about fifteen hundred and twenty dollars, and a talent of gold at sixteen times that amount.

Q. What is represented by the talents given to the servants?

A. These are a representation of the capabilities and opportunities which the different disciples of Christ possessed, to serve him, and promote the interests of his kingdom.

Q. How are the servants, to whom the five talents and the two talents were given, represented as proceeding?

A. “Then he that had received the five talents, went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.”

Q. What is said of him that received but one talent?

A. “But he that had received one, went and digged in the earth, and hid his Lord’s money.”

Q. How does the parable then proceed?

A. "After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them."

Q. What is represented by the coming of the lord of the servants?

A. This is a figure of the spiritual coming of Christ, at the close of that age, to destroy the Jewish city and nation, and establish his kingdom of truth and righteousness.

Q. How long was it from the ascension of Jesus to his coming, as above described?

A. It is supposed to have been about forty years.

Q. Did the followers of our Lord think this a long time, and did they become impatient at his delay in coming?

A. They evidently did. St. Paul writes to the Thessalonians, "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into *the patient waiting for Christ.*"—(2 Thess. iii. 5.)

Q. How did St. James exhort his brethren on this subject?

A. "Be *patient*, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for *the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*"—(James v. 7, 8.)

Q. What do we learn by the passage of Scripture last quoted?

A. We learn that the coming of Jesus Christ to judge the world, *drew nigh* when James wrote this epistle, about eighteen hundred years ago.

Q. What propriety would there have been in the language of the Apostle, if Christ has not yet come to judge mankind?

Q. What did the servant, who had received the five talents, do when his lord had arrived?

A. "And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained besides them five talents more."

Q. What was the reply of his lord?

A. "His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

Q. What did the servant, who had the two talents, say?

A. "He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents besides them."

Q. How did his lord reply?

A. "His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

Q. Who are represented by these two faithful servants?

A. They represent that part of the disciples of Christ who proved faithful to him in the trials they were compelled to pass through, previous to his coming at the end of that age.

Q. What do you understand by their making a good use of their talents?

A. This is a representation of the faithful manner in which the true disciples of the Redeemer exerted all their capabilities, and made use of all their opportunities, in spreading abroad a knowledge of his truth, amid a gainsaying and unbelieving generation.

Q. What is represented by their entering into the joy of their lord?

A. This refers to the safety, the peace, and happiness, which the faithful followers of Jesus experi-

enced, amid the tremendous convulsions and calamities which came upon the unbelieving Jews.

Q. What was done by the servant to whom but one talent was given?

A. "Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed: and I was afraid and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine."

Q. What reply did his lord make?

A. "His lord answered, and said unto him, thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strewed. Thou oughtest, therefore, to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury."

Q. Are we to suppose his lord acknowledged the truth of the charge brought against him, that he was a hard master, reaping where he had not sown, etc.?

A. We are not. The slothful servant uttered this language as an excuse for his delinquency; and his master took him up on his own ground: Even if you knew me to be a hard master, this was a greater reason why you should have made good use of my money—and at least put it to the exchangers, where I could have obtained interest.

Q. Can it be said that Jesus is a hard master?

A. It cannot. He declares that his yoke is easy, and his burden light.

Q. Does the true Christian know from experience, that Christ's yoke is easy and his burden light?

Q. What must we think of people who complain that it is a heavy burden and a grievous cross to be a faithful follower of Christ?

A. We must think they are strangers to the joy-inspiring religion of the gospel, and that they have

not taken upon themselves the yoke of Jesus, but "the yoke of bondage."

Q. Are mankind naturally endowed with different degrees of capability, and different kinds of talent?

Q. Is it not the duty of all to make a good and profitable use of such talents as have been bestowed upon them by their Creator?

Q. Are not those remiss and deserving of punishment, who fail to cultivate, and rightfully exercise, their natural gifts?

Q. Because an individual has but few capabilities, is that a valid reason why he should neglect what he has?

A. It is not. All persons are under obligation to God, to make a proper use—such an use as shall be for their own benefit, and the good of the public—of such powers of mind and body, as have been bestowed upon them. And to neglect this duty, is to subject ourselves to the just chastisements of heaven.

Q. What did his lord command to be done with the slothful servant?

A. "Take, therefore, the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath, shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath."

Q. What is the meaning of this language?

A. We should understand it as simply asserting, that those who have done well shall be rewarded, while those who have neglected their duty must suffer for that neglect.

Q. How would the passage read as thus explained?

A. "For unto every one that hath [done well—that hath made a good use of his advantages] shall be given [a due reward:] and he shall have abun-

dance ; but from him that hath not [done well—that hath neglected his advantages] shall be taken away even that which he hath," [as a punishment for his neglect.]

Q. What is the remainder of the sentence passed against the unfaithful servant?

A. "And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Q. Does this phraseology have the same meaning here, as in the parables of the Marriage Feast, the Master of the House, and other places where it occurs?

A. It does. It is a figurative representation of the calamities and woes, which a just Providence was then about to send upon a wicked people, and in which would also become involved all those followers of Christ who should prove unfaithful to him.

Q. Was this phrase, "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," ever uttered by any person in the Bible except the Redeemer?

A. It was not.

Q. Did he threaten it to any but Jews?

A. He did not.

Q. Did any of the apostles declare to the Gentiles, that they should be cast into a place, or a condition where there should be "weeping and gnashing of teeth," or even intimate that they were in danger of such a fate?

A. They did not. We have no account that the apostles, in all their preaching to the Gentiles, ever uttered the words "weeping, or wailing and gnashing of teeth." These words are not found in the gospels of Mark and John, nor in the Acts of the Apostles, nor in any of the epistles of Paul, or James, or Peter, or John.

Q. What inference do you draw from this fact?

A. It shows the correctness of the application we

have made of this phrase—that it was emblematical of a Jewish punishment, to be experienced at the overthrow of their city and nation—and that whoever apply it to denote the punishment of any but the Jews of that age, depart from the authority of the Scriptures.

Q. Does the explanation we have given to this parable agree with that of several eminent commentators?

A. It does. Dr. Clarke, in reference to that portion of the chapter which contains this parable, as well as the parable of the ten virgins, says, “All the preceding part of the chapter may be applied to the destruction of Jerusalem.”

Q. What is the language of Bishop Pearce on this parable?

A. “The moral of this parable is, that Jesus would reward or punish Christians according to their behavior under the means of grace afforded to them; and that from every one would be required in proportion to what had been given to him. And this distinction, made between them, was to be made at the time when the Jewish state was to be destroyed.”

LESSON XXVI.

Parable of the Sheep and Goats.

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was a hungered,

and ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink ; I was a stranger, and ye took me in : naked, and ye clothed me ; I was sick, and ye visited me : I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee a hungered, and fed thee ? or thirsty, and gave thee drink ? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in ? or naked, and clothed thee ? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee ? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels : for I was a hungered, and ye gave me no meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink : I was a stranger, and ye took me not in ; naked, and ye clothed me not : sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee a hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee ? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment : but the righteous into life eternal."—(Matt. xxv. 31—46.)

Q. Why is this one of the most important parables in the New Testament ?

A. Because it is used as chief proof of the most erroneous and terrific doctrine that the mind of man has ever believed.

Q. What is this parable supposed by many to teach ?

A. It is supposed to teach that at a certain unknown time in the future world, all mankind will be assembled before the bar of Christ, to undergo a trial and a judgment—that a part will then be received into the infinite happiness of heaven, and that the remainder will be cast off into unending misery.

Q. Is it believed that Christ is to be the judge in these transactions ?

A. It is.

Q. What does Jesus say about judging the world ?

A. "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world."—(John xii. 47.)

Q. How does this language agree with the belief above alluded to?

Q. What events did the Saviour represent in this parable?

A. He undoubtedly uttered it for the same purpose that he spake many other parables; viz., to represent the close of the old dispensation—the Levitical or law dispensation—and the punishments, both national and individual, which would then be inflicted upon the Jews, as well as the blessings that would be bestowed upon those nations and individuals, who should receive and believe the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Q. What is the first step to be taken in ascertaining the true meaning of this parable?

A. The first, and most important step, is to learn the *time* when the events represented in the parable were to take place.

Q. How can we determine this point?

A. To determine this point, it will be necessary to take into consideration the whole discourse in which the parable is found.

Q. Where does this discourse commence?

A. It commences near the beginning of the twenty-fourth chapter.

Q. Under what circumstances was it uttered?

A. Jesus had been in the temple at Jerusalem, where he had made a very plain and emphatic address to the Jews. It was the last discourse he ever delivered to them.

Q. Where is this address recorded?

A. In the twenty-third chapter of Matthew.

Q. What did he tell them near the close of his speaking?

A. He told them, that upon them should come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the

blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias.

Q. When did he declare the punishment for all this wickedness should be inflicted upon them?

A. "Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation."—(Matt. xxiii. 36.)

Q. What did Jesus do, when he had closed his address to the Jews in the temple?

A. He then left the temple with his disciples.

Q. Where do you learn this?

A. At the commencement of the twenty-fourth chapter—"And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple."—(v. 1.)

Q. What was done by the disciples as they were leaving the temple?

A. "And his disciples came to him, for to show him the buildings of the temple."—(v. 1.)

Q. What did the Saviour say, when his disciples had directed his attention to this vast and beautiful temple?

A. "And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? [See ye not this immense temple—its strong walls and high towers?] Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here, one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."—(v. 2.)

Q. To what did Christ allude, in this declaration?

A. He alluded to the devastating judgments which God would soon send upon the Jewish city and nation.

Q. Where did Jesus and his disciples go, after this conversation in relation to the temple?

A. They went to the Mount of Olives.

Q. Where is the Mount of Olives?

A. It lies to the east of Jerusalem.

Q. How far distant?

A. About three quarters of a mile.

Q. What separates it from Jerusalem?

A. The brook Cedron, and the valley of Jehoshaphat.

Q. Do those who are at the summit of the Mount of Olives, have a plain view of the city?

A. They do. "So commanding," says Dr. E. D. Clarke, "is the view of Jerusalem afforded in this situation, that the eye roams over all the streets, and around the walls, as if in survey of a plan or model of the city."

Q. Were the Redeemer and his disciples entirely by themselves, on the Mount of Olives?

A. They were. "And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, his disciples came unto him privately,"—i. e. they came to him when none were present but themselves.

Q. What important inquiries did they then make of him?

A. "Saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"—(v. 3.)

Q. What may be said of these questions?

A. It may be said they are three questions in relation to the same general events, or one question propounded in three different forms. In either case, the meaning is the same—they all are respecting certain events which were to take place at the same period of time.

Q. What was the first question?

A. "Tell us, when shall these things be?"

Q. To what things did they refer?

A. To those things of which he had recently been speaking. As though they had said, you have told us that yonder massive temple shall be thrown down—shall be so utterly destroyed, that not one stone shall be left upon another. Now tell us, when shall these things be?

Q. Had the Saviour already told the Jews, when these things should be?

A. He had, at the close of his address to them, in the temple, as recorded in the previous chapter—
“ Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.”

LESSON XXVII.

Parable of the Sheep and Goats—Continued.

Q. What was the second question ?

A. “ And what shall be the sign of thy coming ? ”

Q. To what coming did the disciples refer ?

A. They referred to the spiritual coming of Christ, with his angels, or messengers, to judge that wicked generation ?

Q. Was this coming of Jesus to be at the same time referred to in the first question, when the temple was to be destroyed, and “ all these things ” were to take place, viz., in that generation ?

A. It was, as we learn from the language of Christ on other occasions, as well as in the following part of the answer to these inquiries : “ For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels ; and then shall he reward every man according to his works. Verily, I say unto you, *There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.* ”—(Matt. xvi. 27, 28.)

Q. Did the Redeemer utter the same important truth on other occasions ?

A. He did. “ When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another : *for verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.* ”—(Matt. x. 23.)

Q. What was the third question ?

A. "What shall be the sign of * * * * * the end of the world?"

Q. Did this inquiry relate to the end of this earth on which we live?

A. It did not. The Greek word which is here translated *world*, is not *kosmos*—earth.

Q. What are the original words, translated *end of the world*?

A. They are *sunteleias tou aionos*—end of the age. (See parable of the Wheat and Tares, p. 56.)

Q. Do a large number of the most respectable commentators contend that these Greek words should be rendered, *end of the age*?

A. They do. Such is the opinion of Kenrick, Wakefield, Drs. Clarke, Hammond, Whitby, and Bishops Pearce and Newton, and many others.

Q. Did the first disciples and followers of Christ believe the world, or Jewish age, was then soon to come to an end?

A. They evidently did. St. Paul says, "But now once in the end of the world, [*sunteleia ton aionon*—end of the age, or ages,] hath he (Christ) appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."—(Heb. ix. 26.)

Q. Is there another passage of similar description?

A. There is—"And they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world [*ta tele ton aionon*—ends of the age,] are come."—(1 Cor. x. 11.)

Q. With the light which these explanations throw upon the subject, how should we understand the questions which the disciples put to Jesus?

A. We should understand them as inquiring the *time*, and the *signs*, of his spiritual coming, to bring that dispensation or age to a close, to destroy Jerusalem with its temple, and to execute judgment upon the Jewish nation.

Q. Did the Saviour make a lengthy reply to these inquiries?

A. He did. His answer occupies all the remainder of the twenty-fourth chapter, and the whole of the twenty-fifth chapter, including the parable of the Sheep and Goats, now under consideration, which closes that chapter, as well as the Redeemer's discourse.

Q. Was the Bible when originally written, divided into chapters and verses, as at present?

A. It was not. The whole of each book was written compactly together, without any divisions. Chapters and verses are of more modern invention.

Q. Why were these divisions introduced?

A. It was to facilitate references to any particular passage or word, which is much more readily done under this arrangement, than as originally written.

Q. By whom, and when, were chapters and verses introduced into the Scriptures?

A. This invention has been attributed by some to Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, in the reigns of William the Conqueror and William II. Others ascribe it to Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, in the reigns of John and Henry III.

Q. Who is it more generally supposed introduced these divisions?

A. It is more generally believed they were introduced by Cardinal Hugo de Sancto Caro, who lived about the middle of the thirteenth century.

Q. What regard should we pay to these chapters and verses?

A. Being of modern invention, and entirely arbitrary, we should pay no attention to them in investigating the Scriptures, other than as facilities for reference.

Q. How should we view, in this respect, the long

discourse delivered by Jesus to his disciples, in reply to their inquiries, as above noticed ?

A. We should pay no regard to its being divided into two chapters, but should peruse it as one unbroken series of remarks—one discourse—uttered by the Saviour at the same time, and bearing upon the same subject, precisely as we peruse a modern sermon.

Q. Would it have been much more proper to have had all his discourse included in chapter twenty-four, than to divide it into two chapters ?

A. It would.

Q. How did the Redeemer reply to the questions of the disciples, and point out to them the signs of his coming and the end of that age ?

A. He commenced by saying, "Take heed that no man deceive you."

Q. Was this a very important injunction ?

A. It was ; for the early Christians, it seems, were very liable to be deceived, and some were deceived, as to the time of the coming of the Lord.

Q. How did Jesus then proceed with his discourse ?

A. He went on to point out the signs which should precede and denote his coming.

Q. What were some of those signs ?

A. He told them that false Christs should arise and deceive many—that there should be wars and rumors of war—and famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places.

Q. What other signs did he mention ?

A. He declared that his disciples should be afflicted, and some of them killed—that they should be hated of all nations for his name's sake—that many of his followers should become disaffected, and should hate and betray one another—and that the

love of many would wax cold, on account of the persecutions they would be called to experience.

Q. What does he then say?

A. "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."—(v. 13.)

Q. How should this verse be understood?

A. "He that shall endure these trials and persecutions unto the end of this age, or dispensation, the same shall be saved from the terrific calamities which are to come upon this wicked nation.

Q. What does he proceed to tell them they must do, when they see these signs, and behold the abominations spoken of by the prophet Daniel, in the ninth, eleventh and twelfth chapters of his prophecy?

A. "Then let them which be in Judea, flee unto the mountains; let him which is on the house-top not come down to take anything out of his house: neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes."—(v. 16, 17, 18.)

Q. Why were the followers of Christ to flee in such haste into the mountains?

A. That they might avoid the destruction which would then be on the point of overwhelming Jerusalem and Judea, and all who should be within their borders.

Q. Would there be the least propriety in these warnings of Christ to his disciples, if his coming and these calamities, were not to take place until thousands of years afterwards?

Q. What does he say of the intensity of the sufferings which the Jews were then soon to experience?

A. "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."—(v. 21.)

Q. How does Jesus continue his discourse?

A. He again takes up the subject of the *signs* of

his coming. And adopting a more highly wrought figurative style, proceeds to indicate certain signs which should denote that his coming was just at hand.

Q. What is his language?

A. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days ———."

Q. What tribulation is here alluded to?

A. The tribulation he had been pointing out—the wars, pestilences, famines, trials, persecutions and sufferings, the disciples would have to endure.

Q. How does his description proceed?

A. Immediately after those days of tribulation, "shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man: and then shall the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory."

Q. What else did he say should take place?

A. "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to another."—(v. 29, 30, 31.)

Q. Have we already considered the meaning of this language?

A. We have, in Lesson II.—(See p. 11.)

LESSON XXVIII.

Parable of the Sheep and Goats—Continued.

Q. Is it supposed by many, that the verses last quoted describe a great and awful day of judgment, in the future world?

A. It is. But this is a very erroneous supposition, as is shown by the whole connection, both preceding and following.

Q. What construction does Dr. Clarke give to this language?

A. He says, "The word *immediately*, shows that our Lord is not speaking of any *distant* event, but of something immediately consequent on calamities already predicted: and *that must be the destruction of Jerusalem.*"

Q. What does the same writer say of this kind of figurative language?

A. "In the prophetic language, great commotions upon earth are often represented under the notion of commotions and changes in the heavens: The fall of Babylon is represented by the stars and constellations of heaven withdrawing their light: and the sun and moon being darkened.—(See Isa. xiii. 9, 10.) The destruction of Egypt, by the heavens being covered, the sun enveloped with a cloud, and the moon withholding her light."—(See Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8.)

Q. How does Dr. Lightfoot paraphrase the language under consideration?

A. "The Jewish heaven shall perish, and the *sun* and *moon* of its glory and happiness shall be darkened—brought to nothing. The *sun* is the religion of the *church*: the *moon* is the government of the *state*: and the *stars* are the judges and doctors of both."

Q. What does Lightfoot say upon the application of the figurative language we are now considering?

A. He says, "The destruction of Jerusalem and the whole Jewish state, is described, as if the whole frame of this world were to be dissolved."

Q. Who does Dr. Clarke say are the angels which were to accompany Christ at his coming?

A. He says they are "his *messengers*, the *Apostles*, and their successors in the Christian ministry."

Q. What does he say of the sounding of the trumpet?

A. He says it is "the earnest, affectionate call of the Gospel of peace, life and salvation."

Q. Who does the same writer say were the *elect*, that were to be gathered together "from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other?"

A. He says, they are "the *Gentiles*, who were now *chosen* or *elected*, in place of the rebellious, obstinate Jews."

Q. How does the Redeemer proceed with his discourse?

A. "Now learn a parable of a fig-tree. When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh."—(v. 32.)

Q. How does he apply this parable?

A. "So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, *This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.*"—(v. 33, 34.)

Q. Till all what things should be fulfilled?

A. The things which Jesus had then been describing to them. The figurative darkening of the sun and moon, the falling of the stars of heaven, and the coming of the Son of man accompanied by his angels.

Q. What language does Christ make use of to confirm this assertion?

A. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."—(v. 35.)

Q. How should we understand this declaration?

A. Heaven and earth shall sooner pass away than my word, that all these things shall take place before the close of *this* generation.

Q. Is the assertion of Christ, that all the things he was speaking of should be fulfilled in that generation, a very important one?

A. It is; because it furnishes a *key*, by which we

learn the period when all that he had then uttered, and all that he went on to say, in the same discourse, took place; for whatever follows this declaration of the time, relates as distinctly to that generation, as that which preceded it.

Q. Were the signs Jesus had spoken of, and the events he predicted, fulfilled before that generation passed away?

A. They were. False prophets arose—there were wars, earthquakes, pestilences, persecutions, and all the tokens Jesus had spoken of as manifesting his coming.

Q. After Christ had declared that all the predictions he was uttering to them should be fulfilled *in that generation*, what did he then say?

A. He told his disciples that neither man nor angels, knew the exact *day* and *hour*, when the events alluded to should transpire: this knowledge none possessed but God. Still he had already assured them it should be some time within *that generation*.

Q. Have we already quoted passages where Christ, on other occasions, made the same distinct declaration as to the time of his coming and fulfilling these predictions?

A. We have: but there is still another passage of the same import, which has not yet been noticed.

Q. Will you repeat it?

A. "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels. But I tell you of a truth, there be some *standing here*, which shall not taste of death, *till they see* the kingdom of God."—(Luke ix. 26, 27.)

Q. What construction does Dr. Clarke give this passage?

A. He construes it as referring to the coming of

the Saviour at "the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish economy."

Q. How did the Saviour proceed with his discourse?

A. Having assured his disciples that although his coming, with all its accompanying events, would take place during that generation, yet of the particular *day* and *hour* he could not inform them; he then goes on to impress upon them the necessity of *watchfulness*—that they might be prepared for these momentous events.

Q. Did he dwell upon this point at some length?

A. He did. It occupies all the remainder of the twenty-fourth chapter, and also the parable of the Ten Virgins at the commencement of the twenty-fifth chapter.

Q. What makes it evident that the events represented by the parable of the Ten Virgins, were to take place at the time Jesus had just designated; viz., during that generation?

A. This is made evident by its commencing with the word "*then*," which refers the *date* back to a certain time which had been designated before.

Q. At the conclusion of the parable of the Ten Virgins, what next succeeds in the discourse?

A. Then comes the parable of the Unfaithful Servant.

Q. What was the object of this parable?

A. It was designed to inspire *faithfulness* in the hearts of the disciples—that having discharged all their duties according to their means, with fidelity, they might be able to receive the approbation of their Master, when he came in that generation. This parable is explained in Lesson XXV.—(See p. 146.)

Q. How far does this take us in the sermon of Christ?

A. It carries us to the commencement of the par-

able of the Sheep and Goats, which Jesus proceeded immediately to utter, as a conclusion to his long discourse.

Q. Is it the unanimous opinion of all commentators, that the whole of chapters twenty-four and twenty-five, contain but a single discourse delivered by Christ to his disciples at one time?

A. It is.

Q. Do they all acknowledge that a portion of this discourse had express reference to the coming of Christ at the end of the Jewish age, to destroy the city and nation of God's ancient people?

A. They do.

Q. What do they imagine the remainder of the discourse relates to?

A. Many of them assert that a part relates to the scenes of a day of judgment, in the future world!

Q. Where do they suppose Jesus ceased speaking about his coming in that generation, and about the overthrow of the Jews, and commenced discoursing in regard to a judgment day in the world to come?

A. This is a point upon which they widely differ. Some place this change at the middle of the twenty-fourth chapter—some at the commencement of the twenty-fifth, and others at the beginning of the parable of the Sheep and Goats. Dr. Clarke acknowledges that all which precedes this parable may be applied to the destruction of Jerusalem.

Q. If Jesus did make this important change in his subject, is it not singular that commentators cannot agree where the change took place?

Q. Is it not reasonable to suppose that if Christ, all at once, ceased speaking of things which were then to take place in a few years, and commenced speaking of events which were not to take place until thousands of years afterwards, he would have said plainly that he had thus changed his subject?

Q. Does the Redeemer intimate in the slightest degree, that he makes such an astonishing change?

A. He does not; but continues on throughout the whole discourse, precisely as he would, if he had been speaking of but one period of time.

Q. Is not this circumstance, in connection with the fact that those commentators who suppose he changes his subject, cannot agree where that change takes place, sufficient to convince the unbiassed mind that *Christ made no such change of subject*?

Q. Are there eminent and learned commentators who contend that the whole of the discourse, including the parable of the Sheep and Goats, refers to the coming of Christ in that age, and to the destruction of the Jews?

A. There are. Bishop Pearce and Dr. Hammond are of this opinion.

LESSON XXIX.

Parable of the Sheep and Goats—Continued.

Q. How does the parable of the Sheep and Goats commence?

A. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory."

Q. What word in this sentence serves to direct us to the *time* when the Son of man was thus to come?

A. It is the first word, *when*.

Q. What part of speech is this word?

A. It is an adverb of time, or as some grammarians would say, an *adverbial* conjunction, which connects the sentence, in regard to *time*, with some date previously expressed or understood.

Q. How are we to ascertain the time when the Son of man was to come in the manner described?

A. We can learn this in no way but by referring back to the date which Jesus himself set, in the same discourse as the *time* of his coming.

Q. Has he given explicit information on this point?

A. He has. He plainly said he should come in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, with his angels, *before that generation passed away?*

Q. Does this settle conclusively the time when he should come as described in this parable?

A. It does ; for there is no other coming of Christ mentioned in the whole Bible, either by Jesus himself, or any of the inspired penmen, after that which was to take place during the existence of the generation in which he delivered this discourse.

Q. Having thus ascertained that the time when Jesus was to come was in that generation, should we be careful to construe the whole of this parable to things then to transpire?

Q. What was the Son of man to do, when he should come with his angels or messengers?

A. "Before him shall be gathered all nations."

Q. Should we understand that all nations were to be gathered *literally* into one assembly?

A. We should not. As this is a *parable*, it would be improper to understand these declarations *literally*.

Q. Did God delegate to his Son all power, to rule over the nations of the earth?

A. He did. The Most High declared, through the Psalmist—"Thou art my Son ; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth thy possession."—(Ps. ii. 7, 8.) Christ himself said to his disciples—"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."—(Matt. xxviii. 18.)

Q. What is the language of Isaiah and of Peter on this point?

A. "And he (Christ) shall judge (or rule) among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plough-shares and their spears into pruning-hooks."—(Isa. ii. 4.) "And he (Christ) commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge (or ruler) of quick and dead."—(Acts x. 42.)

Q. Christ having been appointed to rule the world, may it be said with propriety, in the figurative sense of the parable, that at his spiritual coming, all nations were gathered before him?

A. It may.

Q. What was the Son of man then to do?

A. "And he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left."

Q. What was the character of this separation?

A. It was not a separation between *individuals*, but a separation of *nations* only.

Q. Who were represented by the *sheep* and the *goats*?

A. The sheep may be considered as representing the *Gentiles*, and the goats, the *Jews*.

Q. What should be understood by the separation?

A. This is a striking representation of the great change which took place in the condition of the nations of the earth, at the overthrow of the Jews. The latter had been the favored people of God, to whom in past ages he entrusted his religion, while the Gentile nations were left in ignorance; but now their circumstances were to be wonderfully reversed. This is represented by a marked *separation* between them.

Q. Why were the Gentiles represented as coming on the *right* hand, and the Jews on the *left*?

A. The right hand is always considered the post of the highest distinction, while the left hand is a place less honorable.

Q. What is the King represented as saying to those on his right hand?

A. "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world. For I was a hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink," etc.

Q. Does the king say, Come ye blessed, enter into the heaven of perfect bliss and ceaseless happiness, prepared in the world above?

A. He does not. Those on the right hand are invited to *inherit the kingdom* prepared for them.

Q. Is there any passage in the Bible which teaches that men will enter a heaven of endless happiness for the good works they have performed in this life?

A. There is not.

Q. To what kingdom did he allude?

A. Evidently the invitation was for them to enter the *kingdom of heaven*, the *kingdom of God*, which, as we have seen in other parables, signify the gospel kingdom established by Jesus on the earth.—(See Lesson VI., p. 29.)

Q. Had this gospel kingdom been prepared for the Gentiles from the foundation of the world?

A. It had. God had always designed that they should enjoy the privileges and blessings of this kingdom.

Q. How does St. Paul declare this truth?

A. "Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the *mystery of Christ*, which in other ages *was not made known* unto the sons of men, as it is *now revealed* unto his holy apostles and

prophets by the Spirit: that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel."—(Eph. iii. 5, 6.)

Q. What should be understood by the invitation given to those on the right hand?

A. It should be understood as a representation of the invitation and welcome which Jesus and his Apostles extended to the Gentile nations, to come into the belief and enjoyment of his gospel.

Q. Were the blessings of the gospel actually presented to the Gentiles?

A. They were. "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you, (Jews;) but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."—(Acts xiii. 46.)

Q. Did the Gentiles enter into the gospel kingdom?

A. They did. "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord."—(Acts xiii. 48.) The gospel was joyfully received by the Gentiles, and none but Gentile nations have yet entered the kingdom of Christ.

Q. Is our country one of the Gentile nations which has been permitted to enter the gospel kingdom and participate in its blessings?

A. It is.

Q. To what does Christ allude when he says, "For I was a hungered and ye gave me meat," etc.?

A. This is an allusion to the readiness and cheerfulness with which the Gentiles received those who proclaimed the gospel, and attended to their necessities and comforts.

Q. What should we understand by the question of those on the right hand, "Lord, when saw we

thee a hungered," etc., and the King's reply to the same?

A. We should understand this portion of the parable as teaching that whoever rendered assistance to the humblest preacher of the gospel, rendered it unto Jesus—and that on the other hand, whoever refused to assist those who were spreading abroad a knowledge of Christ's religion, refused to assist the Son of God, whose instruments and servants they were.

LESSON XXX.

Parable of the Sheep and Goats—Continued.

Q. What is the King represented as saying to those on the left hand?

A. "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Q. What is the original word which is here translated *everlasting*?

A. It is *aionion*. This word is an adjective, derived from *aion*.

Q. Must an adjective have a similar meaning to the noun from whence it is derived?

A. It must.

Q. What is the meaning of *aion*?

A. It signifies an *age*, or an indefinite period of time. And as *aionion* must have a similar meaning, *aionion—fire*, must signify an age-lasting fire, or a fire which continues to burn for an indefinite or unknown period of time.

Q. Is not the word *everlasting* frequently applied in the Scriptures to things which are well known to come to an end?

A. It is. The possession of Canaan by the Jews is called an *everlasting* possession, and the Levitical priesthood is called an everlasting priesthood, yet these things have long since come to an end. And the Jewish slaves were required to serve their masters *forever* or *everlastingly*.—(See Gen. xvii. 8: Num. xxv. 13: Exod. xxi. 6.)

Q. Do all commentators agree that *everlasting* and *forever*, frequently mean a period of limited duration?

A. They do. This is a well settled and undoubted fact.

Q. Does *everlasting*, in any instance, mean a strictly endless duration?

A. It does in those instances where it is applied to that which, from its own nature, is endless: as to the being of God, or the attributes of God.

Q. How should we ascertain when *forever*, or *everlasting*, or *eternal*, signify an endless period of time, and when they mean a period which comes to an end?

A. The only way to determine this point, is to judge by the nature of the subjects to which they refer.

Q. Is there anything in the nature of *fire* which renders its duration endless?

A. There is not. Fire can no longer continue in existence than it is fed with fuel.

Q. Is there anything in the nature of *punishment* which renders its duration necessarily endless?

A. There is not. The very object of punishment shows that it must come to an end. St. Paul declares that punishment "*afterward* yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."—(Hebrews xii. 11.) To yield this fruit, and to have an *afterward*, it must unavoidably, be brought to an end.

Q. What is the original Greek word, which in this parable is translated *devil*?

A. It is *diabolo*, which signifies an *adversary*, an *accuser*—and has no reference to an invisible wicked spirit, as we have seen in the parable of the Wheat and Tares.

Q. Who were the devil and his angels, alluded to in the parable?

A. It is supposed by some that they were the Jews themselves, to whom the language was addressed. They are, and ever have been, the great *opposers* of Christianity—the *adversaries* of Christ. And they were told to depart into everlasting or age-lasting fire, because that fire or punishment had been expressly *prepared* for them.

Q. Is there not much plausibility in this construction?

Q. What other meaning has been put upon these words?

A. It has been supposed they mean the *enemies* with whom the Jews have had to contend during the long ages in which they have been suffering the just punishments of heaven.

Q. How, then, should we understand the sentence passed upon those at the left hand?

A. We should understand it as signifying the casting away of the Jews into that state of degradation and wretchedness, in which they have been involved from their dispersion, about forty years after Christ spoke this parable, to the present day—and which is truly represented as an age-lasting fire, or punishment—a punishment the duration of which is unknown to man.

Q. How do we know this punishment of the Jews will not be endless?

A. Because Jesus declared that the Jews shall yet see him, when they shall say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."—(Matt. xxiii.

39.) And St. Paul assures us that after the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, then "all Israel shall be saved."—(Rom. xi. 25, 26.)

Q. How does the parable conclude?

A. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

Q. Have we already considered the meaning of *everlasting punishment*?

A. We have. *Kolasin aionion* means simply a punishment, or more properly a *chastisement*, which shall continue for a long and indefinite period of time, but which will finally come to an end.

Q. What is the meaning of the *life eternal*, or *zoen aionion*; into which those on the right hand were to enter?

A. This phrase means the *spiritual life* which is enjoyed by the sincere believer in Jesus Christ.—(See Lesson VI., p. 29.)

Q. Did Jesus himself use these words in this manner?

A. He did. "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, *hath* [already] everlasting life, (*zoen aionion*,) and shall not come into condemnation, but is *passed from death unto life*."—(John v. 24.)

Q. Does the entering into "life eternal," in this verse, mean the same as "inheriting the kingdom," mentioned in verse 24 of the parable?

A. It does.

Q. What do you learn by this explanation?

A. We learn that those on the right hand, the Gentiles, were bidden to enter into the spiritual life, and all the enjoyments and blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Q. Do either the punishment of the Jews on the left hand, or the blessings of the Gentiles on the right hand, have any particular reference to the scenes of another world?

A. They do not. Both refer, according to the explicit declarations of the Saviour, to events which transpired in this life.

Q. Are there some who object to the explanation we have given to this parable, by saying that Christ *did not come during that generation*, as described in the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of Matthew?

A. There are. But their objections should be settled with the Redeemer, and not with us.

Q. Why?

A. Because Christ expressly declared *he would come* in the manner described in these chapters, *during that generation*; and whoever deny that he did thus come, call in question the veracity of Jesus, and must decide the point with him, and not with those who believe and rely upon his word.

Q. Do those greatly err who suppose that unless the Redeemer came *literally* and *personally*, at the overthrow of the Jews, he did not come at all?

A. They do. Christ did not assert that he should come literally, and in his own person, but his whole language shows that he designed to represent his coming as a spiritual or virtual one.

Q. What is the language of Archbishop Newcome, on this subject?

A. "The destruction of Jerusalem by Titus is emphatically called the *coming of Christ*. The spirit of prophecy speaks particularly of this, because the city and temple were then destroyed, and the civil and ecclesiastical state of the Jews subverted."

Q. What does the same writer say of the *nature* of Christ's coming?

A. "The coming of Christ, to destroy the Jews, was a *virtual*, and not a *real* one, and was to be understood *figuratively*, and not *literally*."

Q. What is the opinion of Kenrick?

A. He says, "The great power and glory of

Christ were as conspicuously displayed at the destruction of Jerusalem, and the other circumstances which accompanied that event, as if they had seen him coming upon the clouds of heaven, to punish his enemies."

LESSON XXXI.

Conclusion.

Q. Have we considered all the parables in the New Testament?

A. We have not. A few of minor importance have been omitted; but their meaning is so evident that it is believed few, if any, can misunderstand them.

Q. Do most of those we have examined relate to the Jews, and especially to their overthrow and dispersion?

A. They do; and cannot, therefore, be properly applied to any other people.

Q. Were the changes and calamities which were then hanging over the Jews, of sufficient importance to receive so much of the attention of Christ?

A. They were. No age has ever witnessed such momentous events, or displayed so strikingly the wonderful movements of God's providence. And hence these things were worthy all the notice bestowed upon them in the parables.

Q. What striking evidence is there that most of the parables were designed to represent the fate which awaited the Jews, and cannot, therefore, be applicable to any other nation?

A. There is this evidence, that the Apostles, in preaching the Gospel to the Gentile nations, never repeated these parables, nor alluded to them.

Q. Would they not have urged the parables on the Gentiles, as Jesus did on the Jews, if they concerned the Gentiles at all?

Q. Must not the preaching of the Apostles have differed very essentially, in this respect, from the preaching of many modern ministers?

A. It must; for a large class of preachers at this day seem to depend upon the repetition and literal construction of the figurative language of the parables, for most of the effect of their ministry, while the Apostles never mentioned them.

Q. If it is necessary to repeat and dwell upon the parables, in preaching the gospel at this age, was it not equally necessary that it should be done in the days of the Apostles?

Q. But inasmuch as the Apostles did not pursue this course, what inference should we draw?

Q. What other evidence is there that most of the parables were designed expressly to represent the overthrow and dispersion of the Jews?

A. The parables are principally found in St. Matthew's gospel. This book is supposed to have been originally written in the Hebrew language, for the express use of the Jews, and its author was therefore careful to insert most of the parables of Christ. But the other Evangelists, writing their gospels in the Greek language, and designing them for a more extensive circulation, did not deem it important to introduce so many of the parables.

Q. What additional testimony is there to the same point?

A. The books of Matthew, Mark and Luke, were written before the destruction of Jerusalem. But it is the opinion of the most distinguished commentators that St. John did not write his gospel until A. D. 86, which was sixteen years *after the overthrow of the Jews.*

Q. Does the gospel according to John, contain the parables?

A. It does not contain a single parable, properly speaking.

Q. What inference do you draw from these facts?

A. They strongly corroborate the construction we have put upon the parables. Having mostly been spoken by Jesus to represent the calamities which were about to come upon the Jews, St. John did not insert them at all.

Q. Why did he omit them?

A. Because these calamities had already come—the parables relating to them had all been fulfilled or verified—the Jews had perished in immense numbers—Judea had been laid desolate—Jerusalem with its temple had been levelled to the dust—and the remnant of the unhappy descendants of Jacob were scattered into all the world. Therefore, John thought proper to omit all the parables which allude to these unhappy events.

NOTE.—In order to impress the contents of the Catechism more deeply on the minds of the scholars, let the class, after having passed through the book, give a general review to each of the lessons.

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